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GEORGE LYNCE

[Frontispiece]

IMPRESSIONS OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT

BY

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“TO CARMELA ”

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INTRODUCTION

THERE are few people in the world who have more opportunity for getting close to the hot, interesting things of one's time than the special correspondent of a great paper. He is enabled to see "the wheels go round ;" has the chance of getting his knowledge at first hand. In stirring times the drama of life is to him like the first night of a play. There are no preconceived opinions for him to go by ; he ought not to, at least, be influenced by any prejudices ; and the account of the performance is to some extent like that of the dramatic critic, inasmuch as that the verdict of the public or of history has either to confirm or reverse

his own judgment. There is a peculiar and unique fascination about this reading of contemporary history, as it grows and develops while one peers with straining eyes through one's glasses. There is something like a first night, too, about the way the critics view things. Sometimes great difference of opinion. I recollect the afternoon of Nicholson's Nek—Black Monday, as it was afterwards called—when we returned into Ladysmith half the correspondents seemed to be under the impression that the day had been quite a successful one; while, on the other hand, one had headed his despatch with the words, “Dies Iræ, dies illa!” To get to the heart of things; to see the upspringing of the streams of active and strenuous life; to watch the great struggles of the world, not always the greatest in war, but the often more mighty, if quiet and dead silent, whose sweeping powerfulness is hidden under a smooth calmness of surface—to watch all

this is to intimately taste a great delicious joy of life. The researches of the historian of bygone times are fascinating—absorbingly fascinating, although he is always handicapped by remoteness; but the historian of to-day—of his day—this day—whose day-page of history is read by hundreds of readers, the day after has set to him a task that calls for all, and more than all, that he can give—stimulates while it appalls, and would be killingly wearying if it were not so fascinatingly attractive. That close contact with the men of this struggling world, and the men who *do* things, and shove these life-wheels round, warms up in one a great love for one's kind—a comrade feeling, like that which comes from being tent-mates in a long campaign. Two o'clock in the morning wake to the tramp, tramp of men marching in the dark—marching out to fight—and the unknown Tommy you march beside and talk to in low voice, as men talk

at that hour, is your comrade unto the day's end of fighting ; when returning, to the sentries' challenge you answer "A friend," and, dog-tired, you re-enter the lines, welcomed by his sesamé call, "Pass, friend ; all is well."

IMPRESSIONS OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT

I

THE DANCE OF DEATH

DEATH from a Mauser bullet is less painful than the drawing of a tooth. Such, at least, appears to be the case, speaking generally from apparent evidence, without having the opportunity of collecting the opinions of those who have actually died. In books we have read of shrieks of expiring agony; but ask those who have been on many battlefields, and they will not tell you they have heard them. As a rule a sudden exclamation, "I'm hit!" "My God!" "Damn it!" They look as if staggering from the blow of a fist rather than that from a tiny pencil of lead—then a sudden paleness, perhaps a grasping of the

hands occasionally as if to hold on to something, when the bottom seems to ~~be~~ falling out of all things stable, but generally no sign of aught else than the dulling of death—dulling to sleep—a drunken sleep—drunken death it often seems—very commonplace as a rule. A smile as often as, or oftener than, any sign of pain, but generally no sign of either. Think of this, mourning mothers of England. Don't picture your sons as drowning out of the world racked with the red torture from the bullet's track, but just as dropping off dully to sleep, most probably with no thought of you or home, without anxiety or regret. Merciful Mauser! He suffered much more pain when you brought him long ago to the dentist, and his agony in that horrible chair was infinitely greater than on his bed on the veldt. Merciful Mauser be thanked! • •

The first man I saw badly hit during the war was a Devon at Elandslaagte, just after they had advanced within rifle-range. He was shot through the head, and it seemed

quite useless for the bearers to take the trouble of carrying him off the field; yet they went back looking in vain for a field ambulance. They carried him instead to the cart belonging to a well-known war correspondent. The owner had given the driver strict orders to remain where he was until his return, but the shells were falling around the cart, which, in fact, seemed to be made a mark of by the Boer gunners—perhaps they thought it belonged to one of our generals, whom they may have imagined had taken to driving, like Joubert and some others of theirs. The arrival of the wounded man was a great godsend to the driver, who immediately, with the most humane insistence, offered to drive him to the nearest field hospital. Neither cart nor driver was again seen until long after the battle was over, about nine o'clock in the evening. Strange to say, the man recovered from his wound.

In our first engagements there was rather too much anxiety on the part of a wounded

man's comrades to carry him to the rear ; but it did not continue for long. • The actuating motive is not always kindness and humanity, but a desire to get out of danger. It was soon evident that it was only going from the frying-pan into the fire, as the danger of walking back carrying a wounded man was immensely greater than remaining or advancing more or less on one's stomach. Sometimes it was the unfortunate wounded man who was hit again. Men carrying off a wounded comrade of course render themselves strictly liable to be regarded as combatants.

A still more absurd practice was that of sometimes attempting to carry off the dead during an engagement. An instance of this was seen at Rietfontein. A couple of men of a Volunteer regiment were coming across the open ground below the hill under a pretty brisk fire, when Dr. H——, himself one of the most fearless of men, called out to them, "S—— has been killed down there ; better bring him in." They turned back

immediately, and one of them, J. Gillespie, got off his horse and lifted the corpse on to the saddle, they holding it in position by hanging on to a leg on either side, and walked back, while the bullets were whistling around them, and knocking up little spurts of dirt on the ground in front of them. It was a most ghastly sight; the head of the corpse bobbed about with the motion of the horse, and the lips of the corpse were drawn back in a horrible grin, as if he were laughing idiotically at them for trying to qualify for a Victoria Cross with a corpse. I really think they deserved it just as much as if he had been alive.

• A curious thing happened to a horse of one of the men who were performing this feat. The owner found when he had returned to Ladysmith that his water-bottle, which was attached to his saddle, had been perforated by a bullet. Showing it to another in the evening, they came to the conclusion, from the position of the holes, that it would be impossible for the holes to

be made in the position they were without wounding the horse. The next day, on examining the horse, he found a bullet had actually passed through and through him, and yet apparently he seemed none the worse.

There was another but different instance of a horse carrying a corpse at the battle of Lombard's Kop. There was no leering and hideous grinning at us, however, as the rider's head had been blown clean away by a Boer shell. The 5th Lancers were riding out on our right, when a single horse came galloping past them, clattering furiously over the stony veldt. No wonder the men stared; it was a sight to be remembered. The rider was firmly fixed in the deep cavalry saddle; the reins tossed loose with the horse's mane, and both hands were clenched against either side of his breast; and the head was cut off clean at the shoulders. Perhaps in the spasm of that death-tear the rider had gripped his horse's sides with his long-spurred heels; perhaps the horse also was wounded; anyhow, with head down, and wild and terrified

eyes, his shoulders foam-bespewed, he tore past as if in horror of the ghastly burden he carried.

How wonderfully expressive are the eyes of these cavalry horses at times! There it seemed sheer horror; but often when wounded they look towards one with a world of pitiful appeal for relief; in their dumbness loud-voicedly reproachful against the horrors of war.

Two men being killed on one horse seems rather a tall order, yet it is perfectly true. It happened at the cavalry charge after Elands-laagte. Some of the Boers stood their ground with great stubbornness till our cavalry were only a few yards away. One middle-aged, bearded fellow stayed just a little too long, and had not time to get to his horse, which was a few yards away. He scrambled up behind a brother Boer who was just mounting, but almost immediately the 5th Lancers were upon them. There was a farrier-corporal, an immensely big, powerful fellow, who singled them out. They were

galloping down a slight incline as hard as they could get their horse to travel, but their pursuer was gaining on them at every stride. When he came within striking distance he jammed his spurs into his big horse, who sprang forward like a tiger. Weight of man and horse, impetus of gallop and hill, focused in that bright lance-point held as in a vice. It pierced the left side of the back of the man behind, and the point came out through the right side of the man in front, who, with a convulsive movement, threw up his hands, flinging his rifle in the air. The Lancer could not withdraw his lance as the men swayed and dropped from their horse, but galloped on into the gathering darkness punctured with rifle flashes here and there and flitting forms that might be friend or foe. This poor fellow was killed a few days after at the battle of Rietfontein. How heartily the Boers hated these Lancers! They would have liked so much to have had lances barred as against the rules of war; and it would certainly have made an immense

difference if our side had succeeded in getting a few more chances, especially at the commencement of the war, of using the lance.

The natives, numbers of whom were looking on at this battle, were greatly delighted with the cavalry charge. It seemed to take their fancy even more than did the artillery. "Great fight, baas—plenty much blood, plenty much blood," one of them described it. He said he was crouching down behind a sheltering rock while the Boers were running away past him, and then "the men with the assegais" came galloping after them. A Boer without his horse came running along, and, pulling him out, took his place behind the stone. A soldier galloped along and called out, "Hallo, Johnny, what are you doing here? You'll get hurt." Then, catching sight of the Boer, he stuck him down through the back as he passed. "Ah, baas, great fight—plenty much blood."

Wounds or death by Mauser bullets, or even by the thrust of a lance, are not to be compared, from the point of view of their

pain-inflicting possibilities, with what may be done in that way by the fragment of a shell. That's the thing that hurts. 'Shell fire, speaking generally, is the "Bogy of Battle" to those not accustomed to it.' The main purpose it accomplishes is to "establish a funk." When the actual damage done by shell fire after a battle is counted up and the number of shells fired, the results are most surprising. A poet in the *Ladysmith Lyre* wrote—

"One thing is certain in this town of lies :
If Long Tom hits you on the head you dies."

You do—unquestionably; but perhaps it is worse still to get a piece of a shell somewhere else. What frightful wounds they make sometimes! what mangled butchery in their track! See some poor fellow stretched on the operating-table, stripped for the patching or trimming which half-helpless surgery can supply. Apart from head and hands, which are sure to be khaki-colour with dirt caked in with sweat, the average Tommy usually presents a fine specimen of the human form divine—

what is there finer in the world than the body of a well-shaped, muscular man? I always prefer the figure of the fighting gladiator to that of the Apollo Belvedere—and then, when shell fragments tear this body, it looks like some unspeakably unhallowed sacrilege. The horribly unlucky way these fragments seem to go in—an uncouth and butchering way instead of the gentlemanly puncture of the Mauser. One afternoon a young fellow galloped past me in the main street of Ladysmith. He had just got opposite the Town Hall hospital, when a shell from Bulwana burst right under his horse. When the cloud of dust and smoke cleared away, we found the horse lying on the road completely disembowelled, and the poor fellow flung on to the footpath, with a long piece of shell sticking in his side. As he was taken into the hospital he said, "This means two more Dutchmen killed." But the wound was obviously fatal; there was no use even in removing the piece of shell. The clergyman came to him and spoke to him for some time,

and told him that there was no hope of recovery for him. He seemed to get tired of his ministrations, and asked them to "send down for my chum." When this chum arrived he was unable to speak, but just pressed his hand and smiled, and went off into his death-sleep.

A boy, who could not have been more than seventeen or eighteen, was lying on the side of the hill with his head on a flat stone. He had been hit by a piece of shell, and both his legs were broken and mangled above the knee. He was done for, and his life was only a matter of lasting some minutes. Another man, wounded somewhere internally, was lying beside him. There was no sign of pain on the boy's face; his eyes were closed. He just seemed very tired. Opening his eyes, he looked downwards intently at his legs, which were lying at an oblique angle with his body, from where they had been hit. It looked as if his trousers were the only attachment. As he gazed intently, a troubled look came over his face, and his wounded

comrade beside him was watching him and saw it. The tired eyes closed again wearily, and then the wounded man alongside him, cursing with variegated and rich vocabulary, bent, or half rolled over, and caught first one boot and then the other, and lifted each leg straight down, swearing under his breath the while. Then he lay back, swearing at the blankety blank young blanker, and still watching him. Soon the tired eyes opened again, and instinctively looked down at his legs. They seemed to open wider as he looked; then he smiled faintly, thinking he had been mistaken about them before, and lay back, and the eyes did not open any more. The fellow beside him chuckled and said to himself, "Well, I'm damned!" but possibly the Recording Angel has put down a mark that may help to prevent it.

Times are changed from ages past; there is no longer the mighty "shock of arms," the pomp and panoply of glorious war. Men fall to the shrill whisper of a bullet, the sound of which has not time to reach their ears, fired

by an invisible foe. Their death is merely the *quod erat demonstrandum* of a mathematical and mechanical proposition. But with bow and arrow, spear or battle-axe, Mauser or Lee-Metford, the heart behind the weapon is just the same now as then. Probably faint hearts fail now as then, just as much—shrink to a panic that falls on them suddenly as cold mist on mountain-top; and the stout hearts wait and endure, and perhaps do more of the waiting, and have to sweat and swear and endure this waiting longer now than then before the intoxicating delight of active battle finds vent for their hearts' desire, when, under names like "duty," a monarch's voice in their souls cries "Havoc," and lets slip the old dogs of savagery lying low in every man's nature, until the veldt of this new land is manured, like the juicy battlefields of old, "with carrion men groaning for burial."

II

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

Hot, sweating, dusty, and tired, with no inclination whatever to move out of camp, everybody would find all the indications of approaching disease every day if he were only to think of such a thing. The reading of a liver advertisement in one of the home papers would show all your symptoms, only they all would be "more so." But every one knew it was only the climate, the hard work, and sometimes the indifferent food, and so went on; but a day comes when the food becomes absolutely distasteful, when the appetite begins to go. A long day's riding on the veldt should leave one with a voracious appetite for dinner, but when one comes in and can taste nothing,

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and only just lies down dog-tired day after day, then he begins to think there is something wrong. The idea of going to the doctor is very distasteful, so he struggles on, hoping to work it off, until one day he comes very near a collapse, with head swimming and knees groggy, and then some comrade makes the doctor have a look at him, and his temperature is perhaps 102 to 104. In Ladysmith it was then a question of being sent out to Intombi Camp. To most men this seemed like being exiled to Siberia; but there was no help for it. Comrades said good-bye when it would have been more cheering to have said *au revoir*. The train left for Intombi Hospital Camp at six in the morning, carrying its load of those who had been wounded in the previous twenty-four hours, as well as the sick. It was a sad journey out; men could not help cursing their bad luck and wondering what would be before them as a result of the journey, wondering if they should ever rejoin their regiments or if their next journey would not

be back to the cemetery they were now passing on their right, growing every day more ominously populous. The hospital camp at Intombi was a collection of tents and large marquees, civilian doctors attending the Volunteers and Army doctors the Regulars. There was also a considerable number of the inhabitants of Ladysmith, not alone women and children, but men. Hence the reason that it got christened Camp Funk by the inhabitants that remained in the town. Situated on the flat of the plain, on a level with the river banks, it was by no means an ideal situation for a fever hospital, but still it was a great thing to be out of the way of these irregularly dropping shells and to *know* one was away from them. "Long Tom," on Bulwana, shook the very ground when he fired, and, with the other guns there, often got on the nerves of many of the patients to a trying extent, and the Boers, as a rule, started firing at sunrise, just about the time when the poor devil who has tossed and turned through the long hours of the hot

night in fevered restlessness now from sheer exhaustion is just sinking into sleep, to be startled by the terrific bang above his head and the rush of the shell, like the tearing of a yacht's mainsail, as it speeds 'on its arched course towards the devoted town.

A curious passive fight the patient settles down to, with a fatal little thermometer keeping score and marking the game—a sort of tug-of-war between doctors and Disease. The ground is marked in degrees from 98·4 to 106, the former being normal temperature, the later the point at which, as a rule, disease wins the game.

Take the case of a fellow the author knows intimately. He had held out too long without going to hospital, putting down his weakness, lassitude, and general feeling of extreme cheapness to the climate instead of the real cause, with the result that he started on the real struggle with a temperature of 104·8. At the very start Disease had pulled him over nastily close to his line, and was still pulling him over, as his temperature

was rising point by point. There are various methods of treatment—with him they fought it with a drug called phenacetin, and to the lay mind a wonderful drug it appears. It is not effective with every one. A man in the next bed to him might have been taking breadcrumbs for all effect it produced. With him, however, it worked like clockwork. No sooner was a five-grain dose swallowed than the temperature stopped in its upward course. Then, gradually, like in a good Turkish bath, the pores of his skin opened, and a most complete and profuse perspiration ensued, which was allowed to go on for a couple of hours. Then, with bed and bedclothes drenched, he lay weak, limp, and feeling like a squeezed sponge, but with a temperature that shows three degrees marked down towards his own line. Should there be a nurse available the patient is washed down and put into fresh clothes and pyjamas; if not, as was most usually the case, he lies in his sweat, his skin chilling in patches for a while, and feeling sticky and

uncomfortable all over, but too limp to move. The drug has a strange and wonderfully clearing effect on the brain. He feels as if all his previous life had been passed in some land of twilight. Now he lives in a land of glorious light—light that pervades everything. His eyelids are closed to shut in the glorious light. He seems to have been sitting in some dark theatre when the lights have been turned on on a glorious transformation scene. He has circled the world and seen its loveliest places, but only now sees how beautiful they were. In Samoa, and the Pali at Honolulu, he sees the individual leaves shimmering in the clear air, and then on his quickened consciousness falls a great sense of the beauty of the world. Separate from the beauty of the world seems the life on it, and now for the first time his lips are pressed to her bluest veins. "I want to take your temperature, please," as he feels the little glass tube at the dry skin of his lips. "105.2," he hears whispered when it is withdrawn. They think he

cannot hear as he lies motionless with eyes closed. All the three degrees have been lost, and more—it is a score for Disease. Another dose of phenacetin—surely all that glorious, untravelled, half-tasted world is too beautiful and rich with promise to leave, too full of music he has not heard, too full of pictures he has not seen, too full of unplucked laurels, of lips unknissed, of sunsets which have not yet painted the clouds in their setting—above all, along the passed path of his life are neglected flowers of love lying which he has walked on with scarce a smile of thanks for the throwers, whose hands, perchance now withering, he longs to kiss.

Temporarily the thermometer score is favourable to him again, but all he can do is to lie very still, knowing that every feather-pressure of strength will be wanted. Lying sideways, as he has been shifted round by his nurse on the pillow, he hears the pump, pump of his heart. He never noted that pumping before as he does now—quick

and strenuous it is, but still strong, without the spur of stimulants. Pump on, old heart, he thought-speaks, and on it pumps through the long hours of watching and waiting ; and he watches as a captain might watch the pumping of his water-logged ship. He is lucky to have a heart that works like that. The man beside him was being given brandy every three hours to help the action of his heart. Another thing he was lucky in was in being free from headache. A sufferer farther down from time to time called aloud in agony from the terrible splitting pains in his head, while his was clear to 'a super-sensitive degree—too clear and active to allow of sleep—and soon came the time when he longed with a great yearning for the sleep that would not come. It seemed cruel and unfair that any beggar, any coolie in the fields, any convict could have this sleep that was denied him. How he tried to fix his mind on quiet scenes with the sound of falling water, or the sound of falling breakers fringing the rocks of perilous

seas in fairy lands forlorn ! But sleep would not come ; the panorama of the world spun from scene to scene all the faster as he tossed limply and wearily. *Custos, quid de nocte ?* How slowly passes the night, and night sleepless merges into sleepless day, and for a week the struggle hangs on the winning line of Disease. Each time the thermometer is drawn from his mouth an ever new-born hope which has risen dies with the whispered score, but still the heart pumps strenuously, telling of life and hope the while. On the morning of the sixth day the score is down a degree. Too good to believe in until confirmed by the midday record, and then very, very slowly, by fractions of degrees, it shows less than the record of the previous days. In the cool quietude of some Continental sculpture gallery—he cannot tell where—he has seen a statue of Icarus—Icarus just feeling the earth-spurning power of his new-given wings ; Icarus on tip-toe, with head up and godly-moulded chest and dilated nostrils,

drinking in the clear air, and extended arms towards his new possession of the clouds. The glorious embodiment of god-like life, earth-spurning, heavens-enjoying—and as such he feels—he forgets that his frame is a skin-covered skeleton, that his legs would not bear him upright. He knows only that the spirit of life has been breathed into him again, and that it is very good to be alive. The feeling of being “half in love with easeful death” has passed. The orchestra of life will play for him again. How irksomely slow the days pass until the score reaches his winning-line of normal! and in time he sees how easily it might have been otherwise. His room-mate on his right got delirious, and refused all nourishment. He struggled violently even against the stimulants prescribed for him. His nurse would spend half an hour trying to get a little down. Then he had seen an extreme attempt made to feed him one night. He was held while a tube was passed through the back of his nose and so down his throat,

but no sooner was it down than the strength of fever, like that of a maniac, proved too strong for his nurses ; they could no longer hold him. There was a horrible struggle, with choking coughs and dark blood flowing from his nostrils, and the brandy was spilt on his face and smarting in his eyes. He spent days dying, and more rapid and more feeble grew his pulse, and many times the nurse said there was none perceptible, and then the life would flicker up again. One morning early a bugle sounded outside. He said, "I am on outpost duty to-day ; I must get up at once." He half lifted himself in the bed, repeating, "I tell you I am on outpost duty." The nurse pressed him back gently, and he died. He seemed to have no friends or relatives, no one who knew anything about him. There was a letter found in his pocket showing that he had a mother in a village in Ireland, and that he was her only son.

On the other side of our friend was a poor fellow unceasingly racked with pain either in

head or abdomen. His temperature was not extremely high, but he seemed to be falling away from the pain of the poisonous disease. His pulse was weak, and had to be kept going with constant stimulants. When in the ordinary course of things the disease should have passed he got a series of rigors and shivering fits about every third day, with a cold sweat. While the shivering was on him his temperature would drop to normal or lower, and then bound up to 103 or 104. He had a terrible dread of these fits, and it was pitiful to see him watching their on-coming. Each one that came left him weaker as it passed off.

We are coming back to England in a ship laden with the human wreckage of war—the wounded, the maimed, the sick, who to their graves will carry the maiming of their sickness. There are, amongst these men, those who will crawl about the world lop-sided, incomplete cripples, or those who will be perpetually victims to intermittent or chronic disease; but there is a worse than any of

these disasters to the victim. The man without a leg can get along with a crutch. We know one who lost both legs in Egypt who goes about on a little four-wheeled wooden cart, propelling himself with his hands, and haunts the precincts of a certain club, where the members, seeing the badge which he still wears in his cap, often give him enough to get drunk on. The man who loses his sight from the earth-scattering shell can at worst carry a label to tell that he was blinded in the war, and his charitable fellow-countrymen will give him enough to keep him enjoying life through the channels of the four other senses, and he will still admit that it is good to be alive. Blindness is bad, but war deals worse blows than in the eyes. It deals blows under which the reason itself staggers and is maimed. The lunatic asylum is worse than the hospital. We are carrying back nine men who have lost their reason at Magersfontein and other battles ; two have been mercifully treated and have lost it completely—the padded cell must mean a certain

unconsciousness ; but the greatest, deepest pity of which the human heart is capable is called forth by those who are maimed in mind. Long lucid intervals of perfect sanity give them time to learn the meaning of the locks and bars. "Yes, I know ; I went off my head after Magersfontein," one poor fellow tells you ; another repeatedly asks, "Will they put me into an asylum when I go home ?" What a home-coming ! Sure enough it is to the asylum they are going. They will be lost to what friends or relatives they have in that oblivion of a living grave. When their comrades return, not the faintest echo of the cheering will reach their cells. Men do not like to talk of madness ; they will point with pride and pity to chums and comrades bearing honourable wounds, but these poor wretches will just disappear, lost in the great aftermath of war. We still have the expressions "frightened out of his senses" or "frightened out of his wits," and here are instances of its actually occurring, the strain on nerves being more than the

brains of these men could stand. Is it that their nervous organisation has become more highly strung and bears the strain less sturdily than in times past, or that there is for some minds a hidden terror in the sightless, invisible death that whistles over them as they lie belly-pressing the earth in the face of an unseeable foe? It is not inconceivable that this may have an effect like some horrible nightmare amid all the glare of daylight on some minds. The man is held there in terror by the worse terror of running away; a comrade on his right grows callous by waiting, and to relieve the wants of nature raises himself up and gets hit; the thirst of another overcomes him, and he runs to fill his water-bottle and falls; and all day long, through heat and hunger and thirst, he is held there in a vice of increasing terror, like a child left in the dark denied the language of a cry. It takes strong nerves to stand that strain, we all must admit who have any personal knowledge of what it means; and what a gathering up of the

reins of self-control we often experience ! What wonder, then, that weak nerves cannot stand it, but sometimes break down under the strain ? Such a collapse has a way of being regarded as the uttermost sign of abject cowardice, which by no means follows—nervous men are frequently the bravest of the brave. The refinement of modern shooting-irons seems to call for a certain corresponding refinement of courage—the cold, steel-like courage that can stand and wait, and win by the waiting of their stand.

III

ELANDSLAAGTE

UP before daybreak, but still not early enough, as the Imperial Light Horse and a battery of Natal Artillery had already gone towards Elandslaagte, about sixteen miles from here, at three o'clock.

It was bitterly cold when we started, and for a couple of hours of our journey. About half a mile beyond Modder's Spruit Station we met a man walking along the road in his socks, carrying a pair of heavy boots. He told us he had just escaped from the Boers, after having been, with thirty other miners, their prisoner since Thursday last. His feet were sore from running in the big boots, and he was nearly exhausted.

The Boers had looted the stores, station, and mining office at Elandslaagte, and in



BRINGING WOUNDED BACK INTO LADYSMITH.

remain here no longer, so the order was given to retire. The guns limbered up, leaving the shattered wreck of the waggon behind, and the trains commenced to move back slowly, keeping pace with the cavalry and artillery. The Boer guns kept firing until out of range, and then there was a desultory pitter-patter of rifle fire at a sufficient distance to be completely ineffectual.

We retired back just behind Modder's Spruit Station and rested there. The sun had now broken through the clouds and poured down hot on the yellow veldt, where we were. • A beautiful scene stretched away before us. The veldt was not all yellow, but in low-lying places, after the recent rain, was beginning to be streaked with vivid green. Opposite us, across the flat or gently undulating veldt in the middle distance, were hills and kopjes, while beyond, purple under clouds or light blue in sunshine, rose to the far horizon mountains, pointed, or of that quite flat-topped shape so characteristic of this country.

No one who has been through this day can ever forget the beautiful series of military tableaux, the gorgeous colouring, the constantly varying effects of light and shade, under clear, blue sky, or when piles of great white cumuli were passing, until, darkening with the progress of the fight, an unnatural gloom blackened the heavens, and from the inky clouds torrents of rain poured upon the combatants. The variety of colour, light, and shade was only equalled by the variety of the military movements during the day. A complete series of sketches or photographs would serve for illustrations for a handbook of modern tactics—the reconnaissance in force in the morning—engagement—orderly retreat carried out exactly according to book—march out of main body; advance of main body, cavalry on each flank, skirmishing outflanking movement on the right, etc., etc., on to the cavalry charging through and through retreating and beaten enemy. •

At 11.20 two squadrons of cavalry and a battery of artillery arrive, and shortly after

another train full of troops is seen approaching in the distance.

Chatting with Colonel Chisholme, of the Imperial Light Horse, I was chaffing him about calling them "light," pointing out a group of giants standing near him; but he agreed that their hearts were light, anyhow, whatever their weight might be. He had commenced his military career when eighteen in the 9th Lancers, and his Imperial Light Horse was embodied on the 9, 9, 99. He was telling how all the important dates of his life had a 9 in them, as Major Douglas Haig galloped up and told him we were going to start. I said, "All these nines clearly point to your living to ninety-nine." "Oh no," he laughed back, cheerily, "I don't wish to live to be as old as that." His wish was gratified.

"Saddle," "Prepare to mount," "Mount." We were going forward again.

At 1.30 we started, after just two hours' rest, in which the main body had come up, so that our entire force now consisted of the 5th Lancers, Imperial Light Horse, two

field batteries of Royal Artillery, the Devonshire Regiment, half a battalion of the Manchester, and half a battalion of the Gordon Highlanders. At 1.55 fire opened from the tops of the line of ridges running parallel to the railway line, which were all lined with men. Some of the 5th Lancers have already gone off to the extreme right. At the foot of the first hill, from which firing proceeds, a squadron of the Border Mounted Rifles are dismounting, and now two lines of khaki figures are climbing steadily up the hill. Long before they reach the top the Boers are seen retiring. They have no idea of making a stand yet, and as the khaki figures reach the summit the Lancers, sweeping round from the extreme right flank, join them. During this time the Devons and Manchesters have been pouring out of the train, and are now crossing the veldt in dotted lines towards the ridge of hills.

2.15.—Another train now appears, bringing further reinforcements.

2.30.—Quite a hot fire now opens on the

extreme left, and in a few minutes the artillery are ordered forward, and the six guns pass us at a gallop. They are soon lined up and firing shrapnel at some Boers, who scurry away over the brow of a kopje. The guns limber up and jump the railway line—a pretty stiff little obstacle—the narrow gauge metals being on top of a narrow embankment. Then across a level field of veldt, and they commence to ascend a slight depression, which is just behind a shouldering billow of veldt. It is hard work for the artillery horses over this ground, but it is fine the way they tug and strain at their work. The officers urge the men to hurry forward. Already a gun is heard from the Boers. They have opened fire. Two wheelers of an artillery waggon drop down, apparently dead, from exhaustion.

I had just been watching their heavy sweating sides and foam-streaming mouths before they collapsed. Already two spare horses are being brought round to replace them as we hurry forward.

Now, all of a sudden, things become lively, and do not slacken again until the finish. No sooner have the first of the cavalry appeared than the Dutch guns open fire. R-r-r-r rip—a shell drops amongst the artillery and cavalry just ahead of us. The cavalry wheel and spread themselves into more open order none too soon, as now the shells come fast. The Boers have got the range exactly. Bang bursts a shell amongst the Imperial Light Horse near me. A shell bursts quite close, and a piece drops between Bennett Burleigh and me. The life, vigour, and swing of movement of these few minutes when we first came under fire was magnificent, the cavalry wheeling and circling, infantry deploying, the rattle of the artillery waggons, the cracking of the drivers' whips on the backs of the straining, struggling horses, the rending sound of the shells in the air like the tearing of a great canvas mainsail; the loud report when a shell exploded, or the dull thud when they simply buried themselves in the veldt.

How lucky for us so few of them exploded ! There would have been terrible damage done, especially by the first few shots, when the cavalry and artillery were massed together. It was now for a while an artillery duel, but the Devons were quietly getting forward for the front attack. The cavalry had swung out on the extreme right flank, and the Manchesters and Gordons were going on to the ridge to take them on their right flank there, while the Devons went up the face.

The Boers changed their artillery fire from time to time ; first it was at our artillery and cavalry, then into the Devons as they advanced or as they lay down in the last field of veldt, waiting for the final charge ; and then they sent a few shells into a body of cavalry that was on our extreme left. The very last shot they fired was a good one, just when the fight was over, right into our guns.

I saw a little rocky point ahead of me, as if made on purpose for a war correspondent.

By running across some open ground I was on to it. There was good if not ample cover on the top. It was in the middle of the angle made by the line of advance of the men along the ridge and the line of the Devons' main advance, and quite close to the hill. Stretching away on our left over a level khaki-coloured sloping field (if I may so call it) of veldt, were the Devons lying behind ant-hills, placed as if on purpose to give scant but welcome shelter to troops advancing under fire. The colour-scheme of the whole stretch was perfect for concealment, and there was Tommy learning more of how to take advantage of scant cover in this half-hour, under the bitter pitter-patter of Mauser bullets, than he would learn at home in years of manœuvres.

That was a trying wait for Mr. Atkins; yet how steadily he stood it—or not exactly stood it, but crouched it, lay it, or mother-earth-hugged it! On our right was the level sky-lined hill, ending in a rounded, precipitous point, on which the Boer guns

were stationed. Under that heavy-hanging bank of clouds, yet just behind it, a clear steel-like light was showing. Against this, upon the top of the hill, silhouetted with most delicately accurate sharpness, were the figures of the Manchesters. The Gordons were in the same line over the rounded top of the hill. They advanced at a run, crouched, then swarmed forward again, and again lay low. Then the little runs became shorter, the rests longer, and the fire hotter and more continuous. Were they going to take that hill before complete nightfall, or was it going to be a two-day job, notwithstanding the five hours' hard fighting we had had already? A man near me said to me, "Do you hear the steam escaping? I expect it is the Boers letting it off from the colliery which they took on Thursday." It was the sound of steam, of escaping steam, right enough, but that sound was made by bullets. It went on continuously from the time the final infantry advance took place, and rose in a crescendo of hissing vehemence as we

neared the supreme climax of the struggle. How eagerly we watched these creeping figures going forward! Would they succeed? Would they ever reach the point of the hill? How slow it seemed, but steadily, steadily on along the ridge they went.

Now all the great orchestra of battle was playing—from behind us on the right our artillery were firing at the hill in advance of the Manchesters and Gordons—in one minute that I timed with my watch I counted sixteen discharges. How the shells shrieked and whirled over us! I found myself somehow humming the "Ride of the Valkyrie," which these shells had suggested; then the Maxims would play a few bars, or a sharp volley ring from the left. The rocky kopje was vocal with rattling echoes, while with piccolo distinctness the air above and about us sang with the sharp Mauser notes.

It was now a quarter to six. Rapid movements could be seen amongst the Boers on top of the hill; some were beginning to gallop off, over the sky line, but others

galloped in the opposite direction. Our artillery fire had now reached a nicety of deadly accuracy. They were firing impact shells. I had my glasses on one horseman who appeared to me to be firing from his saddle, and fighting stubbornly. There was no sign of running away about him. As I looked the figure became a little cloud of smoke—the smoke cleared—horse nor rider was any longer there. Chancing to look at another, who was darting about irregularly, as if confused and not knowing which way to fly, a fountain of smoke flew up in front of his horse as a shell burst. When the smoke cleared he and the horse were lying on the ground, and immediately after to a third exactly the same thing happened.

The crescendo of battle had now reached a climax in a perfect roar of sound. The bugles sounded the charge. God bless the man that wrote these heart-cheering notes. Forward—rattling, stumbling, falling over the rocks, cheering, swearing, forward anyhow—formation be hanged!

How the Devons climbed these rocks! Following in the right of the Devons' wake, passing their wounded across that slopy field of veldt, and the flat to the base of the hill, it was a sweating, breathless climb up; the men were already cheering on the top above my head. The first sign of mortality on the Boer side I encountered was a hairy little black pig lying on his side bleeding proverbially—then a tall Boer lying head-long down the rocks. On the top—what confusion! Tommy, drunk with delight of battle. Prisoners, wounded, Gordons, Manchesters, Devons—all mixed inexplicably. A Boer gun still in position was a centre for gathering. In another place the ground was strewn with rugs, broken provisions, empty and half-empty bottles, saddles galore.

“'Av a 'oss, guv'nor, 'av a 'oss?” said a dirty-faced, sweaty, but generous Tommy to me, as he led a black Boer steed by the bridle. Not liking to take his capture from him, I went off to where he told me several

were standing, and picked out a likely-looking grey. Darkness was now rapidly falling. A Tommy came up and led off another horse.

“I’m taking this for the Colonel; me and the old man don’t get on well. The old buffer is always down on me whenever I takes a drop, but I’m going to make him a present of a ’oss this night, that I am.” He went off in the darkness, towing the present by the bridle.

At this moment very few officers were at this point of the hill; the Gordons, for instance, had lost thirteen. I came then upon General French, who had come along the ridge in the fighting line with the Manchesters and Gordons, and was glad to have so early a chance of offering him my heartiest congratulations on the day. The last time I had met him was when the artillery on both sides were hard at it; he appeared then more like a man playing a game of chess than a game of war, and was not too busy to sympathise with me on the badness of the

light when he saw me trying to take snapshots of the Boer shells bursting amongst the Imperial Light Horse near us.

General French is deservedly very popular with officers, men, correspondents, and all who meet him, and we were all glad at the brilliant ending of this hard-fought day.

The 5th Lancers and 5th Dragoon Guards were now pursuing the retreating Boers. The Dragoons carried lances, which may account for the credit which was equally due to them with the Lancers being unduly given to the latter. Another hour or half-hour of light and they would have played the very mischief with the retreating Boers. The Dragoons chased them past a Red Cross tent, where a man was waving a Red Cross flag. They respected those gathered about the tent; but one ruffian, waiting until they came abreast, shot point-blank at a private. As he fell dead from the saddle Captain Derbyshire rode at his slayer and shot him dead with his revolver. A big Dragoon

would put his foot to the back of a Boer and tug to get his lance out. Some of the Boers stood firing till the cavalry came within twenty yards. The ground was broken veldt with patches of outcropping stones, which, added to the fading light, made it terrible ground for charging over. Already Tommy on top of the hill and down its sides was groping for the wounded. Tommy had behaved magnificently throughout the long fight, and now Tommy was finishing the day by behaving well to the Boer wounded. A rug here and a drink there, and later on the best place near the camp fire. In the previous five hours, Tommy's respect for the enemy had risen enormously; now he was treating his wounded with a rough but genuine kindness positively chivalrous. One might write for days upon the incidents of this glorious day, into which the events of a stirring lifetime seem crowded. Our artillery got a good chance, and showed up magnificently. The dauntless bravery of English officers we seem to take for granted

as a national heritage; but in something stronger than admiration—in positive love—my heart goes out to Tommy Atkins—sweating, swearing, grimy, dirty, fearless, and generous—Tommy is a bit of “all right.”



ADVANCE OF THE GORDONS AT ELANDISLAAGTE.

IV

A GLIMPSE OF OUR GUNNERS

Go with the gunners if you want stirring scenes of modern war. You will not, as so often happens when one goes with an infantry regiment, spend a day lying on your belly in the scorching sun, while the air is vocal above you with the singing of bullets from an invisible foe, whose position is vaguely located on some quiet and deserted-looking kopje in front. Go with the gunners, and every time you go you will come back with an increased admiration for them. It is impossible to tell the result of rifle or even Maxim fire unless, as at Omdurman, the enemy stand up to be massacred ; but with the guns you can at least see where the shells fall or the shrapnel burst. For this reason the Vickers-

Maxim automatic—or pom-pom, as it was christened at Ladysmith—must be a most delightfully interesting weapon to the gunner who operates it. Each little shell on impact throws up a small fountain of smoke as it explodes, so that he sees at once if his fire is short or too high, and gets his range immediately; then he can follow cavalry about and tickle them up, or play around a patch of veldt where he knows the enemy are lying, just as a gardener would sprinkle with a watering-pot. It is a most demoralising weapon, but the explosion is so small that it does much less harm than would be expected.

Let us take a typical day with the gunners. Photographs or cinematographs are entirely unsatisfactory in giving any idea of the “movement” of a battery going into action. There is the rattle of the gun-carriages, like a running accompaniment of rifle fire; the jingle of the harness; the splendid, strenuous, willing pull of the horses straining against their collars. They know all about it, these

bright-eyed beasts quivering with life and work, and want no whip or spur until the work of tugging over the broken ground under a sweltering sun staggers them under the strain.

There could not have been a more beautiful day than that of Elandslaagte for watching the gunners in action. Before the main part of the action was entered on, two batteries were ordered to reply to some fire coming from the left of our line of advance. They went forward at the gallop, bounding, jolting, and swaying over the uneven veldt, and, on a slight rise of ground showing out against the deep blue background of some hills, unlimbered and opened fire. A few horsemen were seen galloping over the ridge of a hill in front, and that was all. Then they limbered up and were ordered across to our right; a low but steep little embankment of the narrow-gauge railway was in front of them. It was a pretty sight to see them negotiating this obstacle—the jolting of the springless wheels up and down the stony

sides and across the rails on top ought to have been enough to shake the teeth out of the men sitting on the limbers, and gripping hard to keep their seats. By the way, how loudly the nether part of a gunner's anatomy must sometimes cry out for a cushion !

No sooner had they got clear of this jump than the Boer guns opened and began to make excellent practice. How every gunner felt longing to reply and silence them ! Bang, burst, or spinning with whizzing hops, the shells came dropping in rapid succession. The Boers had been careful to get the exact range the previous day, and were not now wasting time or ammunition. Our guns had to go up a sloping depression at right angles to the Boer fire before getting into a position for opening. Every instant was of value, as the Boer shells were now dropping amongst the Imperial Light Horse and the infantry, who were just beginning to deploy. Under whip and spur they galloped up the slope—Gad ! it was a sight to see how these artillery horses pulled ; there was no taxpayers' money

wasted there. One drops down, and the sharpness with which he is replaced by one of the spare horses would have drawn ringing rounds of applause at an Islington tournament. They take up a position at the top of the rising ground, monopolising the attention of the Boer gunners as they unlimber.

The gunners jump from their seats sharp as sailors, unhook the limbers, leaving the guns pointed towards the enemy. Then the drivers trot off about fifteen yards, wheel round, and sit motionless on their horses, facing the fire. One cannot but admire the courage required to sit coolly like that with nothing to do but watch the enemy firing deliberately at them—see the discharge, and then await the arrival of the shell as it comes whirring and hurtling through the air. With what critical interest they must watch improvement in the enemy's shell-bowling! One was forcibly reminded of cricket bowling at Elandslaagte. Many of the shells did not burst, and those that were not full-pitched came in the manner of swift bowling along

the rounded, almost flat-topped surface of the rising ground; and these gunners, sat as steady as if they were the wickets just stuck in the ground, with never a duck of the head or a blink of the eye. The men working the guns are kept busy all the time, and have no time to think of or watch the enemy's shells; but the drivers have nothing to do but wait and watch. The horses, with still heaving foam-streaked sides, stand panting and tossing their heads. The Boers have got the position of our batteries accurately, as it must have been previously obvious that it was the one we would have taken up. Three of the gunners have already been badly hit; immediately after, with a terrific crash, a shell hits an ammunition-waggon fair. Those around hold their breath for a still greater explosion, but, wonderful to say, the ammunition does not explode. When the dust has cleared, however, the wheel of the waggon is found smashed to matchwood, and the vehicle lies helpless and useless on its side. But still

steady as rocks sit the drivers facing the music. This is courage—the real article—and the market price of this kind of British pluck is one and twopence a day!

Three days later I was photographing these boys behind their guns on the hill at Rietfontein, standing just as quietly under a hot rifle fire at 1200 yards' range, which the enemy kept up persistently, although we had silenced their guns and actually set fire to a long line of grass on the hill from which they were firing. An innocent, harmless-looking hill it seemed, with not a Boer visible on it, yet the bright summer air simply sang with the notes of Mauser bullets—clear and musical notes when they pass high overhead, but with a sharp and bitter ping when they pass close.

But the best sight of all is to see our gunners going out of action. They go in at a gallop, and retire at a walk. There is something so delightfully contemptuous of the enemy's marksmanship in this. One day outside Ladysmith was typical. A

couple of batteries went out with some cavalry for a small reconnaissance in force, located the Boer gun, and quickly drove the gunners to cover. The vultures had gathered as usual at the sound of their dinner-gong, but there was no fight, and soon the guns limbered up, and turned back across the plain. Immediately the Boer gunners were back at their gun, and, serving it with wonderful rapidity, sent shell after shell at our retiring batteries. The first was just short, then the two next went over; but on they went quietly, never breaking out of the walk. Then a shell fell between a gun and a limber, and did not burst. The great vultures wheeled and circled lower, waving their shadows below them on the parched plain; but there was no dinner for them that day—not even a horse was hit. And so always, when these field guns stop barking and limber up, it reminds one of pulling a dog out of a fight by the tail as they are dragged slowly, as if reluctantly, away; while the drivers don't bother to look round,

and don't look a bit like heroes full of courage at the magnificent price of one and twopence a day.

Rattle of iron on stones—clear, sharp words of command—clink of breech action—coldness of iron will warming the steel throat that voices its thoughts—hard, scientific, inhumanly mechanical; yet there is a subtle, attractive feeling that draws together the living elements that serve the gun. I barely escaped being knocked down one day by an artillery horse galloping furiously over the veldt. He had got badly torn by a shell; wild with the pain, he raced around until exhausted, and then, managing to stagger up to a gun, fell dead, with his head against the trail.

V

IN THE TENTS OF THE BOERS

LATE in the afternoon of a day in the early part of last December I had ridden out from our lines in Ladysmith towards a certain position usually occupied by a Boer outpost, trusting by my going out deliberately and unarmed to get one of the men there to have a talk, just as one of the Lancers had a few days previously. For some time we had been on short rations of "copy" as well as food. I rode along the edge of an empty spruit, into the bed of which my spurs would have propelled my horse in the unlikely event of a shot being my first greeting. The spot where I expected to see the outpost was where the veldt, from being bare, commenced to be thickly covered with mimosa trees ; but

there was no one there—no living thing, except, a little springbuck that started up as I arrived, bounding away over the long tufted grass, its little white rump showing like the flutter of a girl's petticoat. It stopped and, turning its pretty head, regarded me with great brown frightened eyes, as if I were the first human apparition to invade its sylvan solitude. It was clear there were no Boers immediately about; equally clear that this was a great chance unexpectedly offered of having a try to get south to Clery's or Buller's force, and be the first white man to bring the news from Ladysmith out of the beleaguered town. I was already started on the shortest route to the Tugela. I went on, and for about a mile no sign whatever of the enemy, and I thought of the theory more than once put forward that we were all the time being besieged by a ridiculously small but extremely mobile force. It was not until I was well in between Bulwana and Lombard's Kop that I caught sight between the trees of a laager of

miscellaneous tents on the lower slope of the latter. Dismounting and going cautiously, I passed it and passed a man cutting wood, who was fortunately too industriously intent on his work to notice me. Bearing to the right, I was soon south of Bulwana and past the Boer lines. The rest would be comparatively easy, as an open stretch of country lay before me, where darkness would soon give me cover now that I had reached the edge of the trees. While waiting, I heard a voice behind me shout something in Dutch. Looking round, I found a Boer covering me with his rifle at ten yards, and the dream of a journalistic "beat," as they call it in America, vanished as he escorted me to his field cornet's camp. After some questioning by the field cornet, they gave me supper of meat, bread, and coffee—the bread arrived down every morning by train from Dundee, where it was baked by a Frenchman at what a short time ago had been our bakery. Then, as we sat round the big tent smoking, I gradually learned from them the first news

of the outer world and the war, after being five weeks cut off in Ladysmith. As a running commentary on the news, we drifted into a series of discussions on the conduct of the war, and the observance of the usages of war by both armies. *Audi alteram partem*, and here I was hearing it with a vengeance. Two-thirds of them spoke English, as nearly all in this laager were from Heidelberg. They had about five charges against us of unfair fighting, and there was not the slightest doubt of their complete conviction that each of these charges was well founded and true. The worst of it was that in every instance they had some circumstance, the result of mistake, misconception, or individual wrongdoing, on which to raise a formidable superstructure of generalised accusation. "We fired on the Red Cross"—they instanced Elands-laagte and the battle of Nicholson's Nek; in both instances their waggon^s were behind kopjes that our gunners could not possibly see through. I threw them back their similar offences—the afternoon of

Nicholson's Nek and their firing on the Town Hall hospital at Ladysmith. In the first instance, they said our waggons were too far off to be distinguished, which I knew was the case; and as regards the second, they argued that we had no right to continue to fly the Red Cross over the Town Hall when they had given us a neutral hospital camp outside at Intombi. Then had we not a right to fly a Red Cross over our sick and wounded while they had to wait for the next morning's train to bring them out to hospital? I urged. "No; put them in your holes underground," was the reply. We drifted into a discussion about dum-dum bullets, which they claimed to have found in our abandoned camp at Dundee, and, from seeing our doolie bearers, had fully made up their minds that we were using Indian troops against them. I then let them have it straight about their misuse of the white flag, which they denied.

Every pause in our talk was filled by the sound of deep, loud chanting coming from a tent hard by. Presently I went out to see

them at their evening service. A big tent was full of men squatting around, the short twilight was fast darkening into night outside, and the interior of the tent was lit by two candles stuck in the necks of bottles. Except a couple of old men, they were all in the prime of life, and a splendidly strong-looking set of fellows they were. They sang, without any drawl or nasal intonation, straight out from their deep chests. The chant rose and fell with a swinging solemnity. There was little of pleading or supplication in its tones ; they were calling on the God of Battles ; the God of the Old Testament rather than the Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount was He to whom they sang ; and sometimes there was a strain of almost stern demand about it that gave it more the ring of a war-song than a prayer. Entering the door of that tent seemed like going into another century. It could not be but luminously evident to the onlooker that these men were calling on an unseen Power whose actual existence was as real to their

minds as that of their Mauser rifles stacked around the tent-pole. One could not help contrasting this obvious sincerity with the perfunctory church parade on our side, and this religion with that of two-thirds or three-fourths of our army of careless agnostics. Barring a very small minority, principally Irishmen, there is no place for religion in Tommy's intellectual kit. It has just degenerated into being an old magazine from which he draws his swear-words—a sort of bandolier of blasphemy. It was hot in that tent, and the sweat made the foreheads of these deep-voiced choristers shine against the dark shadows cast behind them on the canvas. It was curious to notice how the knees and elbows of their clothes showed signs of wear from their favourite shooting attitude, and there were many with buttons missing from their waistcoats that had been scraped off by the stones on the kopjes, or with buttons of different patterns that had evidently been sewn on by the wearers in place of those worn off. All the Boers



ADVANCE OF THE DEVONS BEFORE THE ATTACK ON ELANDST AAGTE.

appear to give up shaving when on the war-path, which adds to the wild picturesqueness of their appearance. I found the hymns they were singing were old Dutch ones. "We keep this up every night in camp," one of them said to me, "just the same as at home." When they had finished, they all lit their pipes, and then I was put through a catechism, which was the same at every camp or with every group of Boers I met for the next week. "What did I think of the Boers?" "Did I not expect to meet a lot of savages?" "Was I not surprised to hear them speaking English?" And then they were everywhere keen to learn if we appreciated the way our prisoners were being treated in Pretoria, and equally curious to know our opinion of how they were fighting. As I thought the siege of Ladysmith, since they would not assault, had become dolorously monotonous, I suggested, so that things might be enlivened a bit, that a race meeting or a football match might be got up between teams from each army

on the neutral ground at Intombi. The younger men received the idea of a football match with acclamation. "Ya, goot," said a young giant beside me, rubbing his big hands enthusiastically, "it will be the greatest football match that ever was played;" but an old burgher, with his left hand in a sling, bound up in dirty-looking bandages, interposed: "No; the only game we like to play now is the one with cannon-balls." No; these dour, stolid men take their fighting sadly and sternly; there is none of the "frolic welcome" with which our Irish Tommies, for instance, enjoy their fighting or endure the waiting for it. When I was a prisoner in Pretoria they used to keep us awake at night with fireworks after news such as that of Colenso and Magersfontein, but, except amongst the young boys, they were not given to exultation over what they had done or to any boasting. Then they talked about lyddite, and it was quite clear that it had been a terrible bogey in their minds, and that they had imagined it was to

have an effect like throwing earthquakes at them, and it was equally evident that the result of actual experience had fallen short of their apprehensions.

We went out from the stuffy hot tent into the clear sharp air of a starlight night on the hills, and from a lighted tent, high above us on the slope of Lombard's Kop, came the chant of a psalm taken up by many voices outside. "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered," they sang, like Cromwell's soldiers at Dunbar. As I laid down in the field cornet's tent, with his son, a boy of fifteen, at one side of me, and a man over sixty on the other, I could not help thinking of the great tragedy of all that was yet before these people when they would begin to realise that they called in vain on their God, that they had no monopoly of the Almighty, that the God of their fathers fights no longer on the side of the Boers, but on that of the big battalions. This will be the desolation of downfall.

VI

THE FELLOW THAT FELT AFRAID

HE was just a common or garden ordinary sort of chap. He was lying on hot, pointed, uncomfortable stones through which long tufts of coarse grass protruded. Drops of sweat were trickling down his face, and his hands left wet marks where they came into contact with the stock or barrel of his rifle. With elbows, with chest, with stomach, with legs, he was trying to press hard against the ground. It is a curious feeling, that lying down and trying to press against the ground. He wished to reduce himself to the substance of a postage-stamp. This was the day of his first fight, but since he had got up everything was unaccountably unlike his expectation. The reveille had sounded

in the dark at three o'clock in the morning. It was bitterly cold outside the tents, and his hands trembled as he fumbled with his putties. He had had a hard struggle to turn out from under that warm rug where he had been dreaming the real soldier's dream. Detaille's picture is all rot—the soldier's dream is not the picture of victorious battalions with banners flying, marching through the clouds. He had been dreaming of tripe and onions. Visions of past good meals in comfortable quarters washed down with deep cooling draughts of bitter floated in procession through sizzling clouds of vapour smelling of invisible kitchens. As he fumbled with his putties the rumble of waggons came out of darkness from a road hard by, mingled with the sharper rattle that tells of the gunners already on the move. The vague rumours of last night, he felt, were going to shape into the actuality of fight; but what an hour to go out fighting! Why should they be hauled out to fight in the dark? Why could not men wait for

light? Wait until the world was aired? He was thirsty and uncomfortable, with the taste of stale tobacco in his mouth, and joined in the variegated imprecations muttered by the men when he found there would be only a few minutes to get anything to eat and no time for hot coffee. Presently he is a unit in a long snake-like column of men that winds along the road through the dark into the unknown. As he plods on he speculates how the fight will start. Perhaps the kopjes on either side of the road may be already full of Boers. Perhaps the beginning of the fight will be to find that they have marched into another ambush. It was a nasty uncomfortable feeling, that tramping through the darkness into the unknown. He felt better as the light spread from the eastern hills, and felt companionship and security in being part and parcel of that great mass of men that extended before and behind him on the road as far as he could see. Suddenly there is the boom of a gun, and he comes into collision with

the man in front of him, who has stopped dead at the sound. A strange tingling feeling goes up his spine. There is a hush ! No one speaks. The whole essence of vitality strains to listen. A faint whir crescendoes rapidly into the shrill whoop of a steam-siren, and a great balloon-shaped cloud of smoke and dust has already arisen from amidst the marching mass of men ahead. There is no sign whence came the shot. Nothing can be more peaceful-looking than the shoulders of these hills lying bathed in the quiet morning light. There is no sign of an enemy. Sharp words of command ring out while the cloud of smoke and dust is still hanging in the air, and in a dazed and mechanical way he finds himself deploying over the ground, which shakes with the gallop of cavalry as they spread out fan-like on either side of the road. The artillery rattle and jolt over the stones, and the limbers toss like little punts towed through a choppy sea. His company advances in extended order across the stony ground

tufted with grass, and are ordered to lie down. The captain says, "Any men who have got anything to eat, let them eat it now." He has a piece of bread in his haversack, but feels no inclination to eat that dry and crumby stuff; but he is thirsty, and takes a long and deep pull at his water-bottle. The sun has already become very hot. The artillery has already got into action on the left, and is engaged in a duel with the Boer gunners. The minutes of waiting seem hours to him. Then all the men watch with keen interest an officer with a red-banded German cap galloping towards them. The result of his arrival is an order for them to advance up the gradual slope of this rounded hill. Just as he starts there is a light keen whistle in the air overhead like the call of a bird, then another and another. Instinctively he feels that these are made by bullets flying overhead. As he goes on an occasional one rings with a sharp bitterness in its tone, and he ducks his head as one might duck to the swish of a riding-whip near the

face. They go with knees and backs bent, and he longs for the order to halt and lie down again. A fellow drops out alongside of him, but he does not look to see what has happened—he is afraid to look. Just when they have reached the crest of the hill, and when the whistling sounds have become more plentiful than ever, they are ordered to lie down again. Looking through the streaky stems of grass immediately in front of him, he can see a similarly shaped hill about 1200 yards away. It looks absolutely deserted. Nothing moves upon the skyline. Little puffs of smoke momentarily appear above it, which he knows are caused by the bursting of our shrapnel. He begins to feel he is really in the fight, but it is just altogether opposite to what he expects. It is commonplace and disappointing to a degree. He sees the gunners busy on the left, the horses standing behind them as if all the whistling sounds are only a rain-shower. There is a small stone in front of him, just half the size of his helmet. He

knows it is not half big enough to cover him. All his preconceived ideas of a fight are crumbling away. Here they are being led out to lie on the grass to be potted at, and not allowed to reply. But then, as he looks at the opposite hill, he sees nothing to fire at. A group of red-capped officers walk their horses along the line left behind them. He recognises the General in command. They stop, and one of the General's aides-de-camp dismounts and opens a paper parcel, from which the General takes a sandwich and bites a big semicircular piece out of it. He finds it hard to realise that this is a battle and that this is the General commanding. In all pictures of battles that he has seen from his youth upwards the General is seated on a horse poised on two legs, and waving a sword or pointing with a marshal's bâton. And here is a General with a sandwich with a big bite out of it, who points with the sandwich-hand instead. And then he begins to wonder, with all this multitudinous whistling, that nobody seems

to be hit. Then the order is given to advance again. He feels a tremendous disinclination to leave the stone, and waits to see the other men around him get up. They all get up except the fellow on his right. Reaching over with his rifle, he pokes him in the ribs. He then hits him on the shoulder with it. Thinking he is asleep, he tips off his helmet from behind. His eyes are quite open; and then, like a douche of cold water, comes the consciousness that this man is dead. A feeling to get away from that corpse more than any other brings him amongst his comrades a few yards in advance, who are already firing and lying flat. He keeps blazing away mechanically at the innocent-looking hill opposite. His rifle is hot in his moist hands.^h An order to "cease fire" is given, and then there is another long interval of waiting. The whole business seems waiting. It isn't a bit like a proper sort of fight. There is nobody to fight; but still the bird-like notes are in the air above, and bitter little sounds against

stones, and tiny little fountains of dust spurt from the ground around. And then a great feeling comes to him that he would like to be out of it all. There is no glory in it. The sun is hotter than he ever felt it before. His water-bottle is finished, and his mouth is clammy. A young subaltern with an eyeglass, no end of a toff, walks along the front of the line, and he watches with interested delight microscopic ducklets of his head, synchronising with whistles. Just as the toff is opposite him, he spins round suddenly, exclaiming, "By Jove!" and falls down like a sack of potatoes all of a heap. He begins to feel a strange sickness in the stomach, just the same as coming out on the transport. He feels it coming on. He knows he is going to be sick, and as he is going to be sick he wants to go away. There is no use in a sick man remaining in the fighting line. But then he feels as if he were held down there by the weight of the whirring air. There is no room in it for him to get up safely. There is no room

to go away. Momentarily the noises increase. Men are firing about him, and he strains his eyes on the opposite hill to see something to shoot at, and empties his magazine at what looks like a man but may be a tree-trunk, and then stops again and gets sick. Another long period of waiting follows. All the water is gone from his water-bottle ; an intolerable thirst is scorching his throat. He does not reload his magazine, and makes up his mind to say that his rifle is jammed, so that he need not go further with any fresh stupid advance that may be ordered. This is no time to care about what any one may think of him, it is just too awful for anything.

The ground has ceased trembling with the cavalry, who have dashed to the front. There is no longer any whizzing in the air. The "cease fire" is already sounding right along the line. The man who was afraid stands up with his comrades, who are already on their legs. The old Colonel trots along the line, mopping his red face with his

handkerchief. "That was a hot business," he says to his Captain, and calls cheerily to us, "Well done, C Company! You are damned steady boys under as hot fire as I have ever seen." The man who was afraid opens his shoulders and pulls out the collar of his tunic and stoops down to wipe off the cakes of dirty earth that are sticking to his knees.

VII

THE DANCE OF DEATH IN CHINA

“A wind of blight
From the mysterious far North-west we came,
Our greatness now their veriest babes have learned.”

IT was the day after Tung-Chow had been occupied by the Allies. I was riding along a sunken road between the city wall and some high ground on which houses were built. There was a sheer drop of considerable height between the walls of the houses and the stony road below. The shouts of Russians mingling with screams could be heard proceeding from the houses. At the base of the cliff two Chinese girls were lying. Their legs were bundled under them in a way that showed they had jumped from the height above. From their richly

embroidered silken tunics and trousers, their elaborate coiffure, and their compressed feet, they were evidently ladies. They were moaning piteously, and one of them appeared to be on the point of death. Their legs or hips had apparently been broken, or dislocated, by their jump. As I went towards them, the one who appeared least injured shrank from me with an expression of loathing and horror until I offered her a drink out of my water-bottle. Her delicate, childish little hand trembled violently on mine as she drank eagerly from it. The other was almost too far gone to swallow. The hoarse cries of the soldiers, mingled occasionally with a sobbing scream, came from the houses above, telling what they had tried so desperately to escape from. They lay there helpless, evidently in excruciating pain, under a brazen sun that beat down on the deserted dusty road. There was no one within reach to come to their assistance. And there was nothing for it but to leave them there, as many under similar circumstances had had



GEORGE LYNCH CAPTURED BY THE BOERS.

to be left during our previous march of several days. This scene was typical rather than singular. In a large number of Chinese houses in the villages we passed through on our way up, at Tung-Chow, and in Peking itself, it was no unusual sight to see an entire family lying dead side by side on the Kang, where they had suffocated themselves, or to see them suspended from the rafters of their houses, where they had committed suicide by hanging.

In the burden of corpses which the river Pei-ho carried downwards from Peking towards the sea were to be seen the bodies of many Chinese girls and women. One day I myself counted five. There is no question whatever that they had committed suicide. And close to Tung-Chow girls were actually seen walking into the shallow water and deliberately holding their heads under the surface till they were drowned. Such a tale seems very terrible. But to any one who had the opportunity of judging of the conduct of portions of the Allied troops it was not in

the least surprising. Under similar circumstances our sisters and wives would have done likewise.

The Russians and French carried off the palm for outrages on women during the original march, and subsequently the Germans similarly distinguished themselves. This was more particularly the case with small bodies of men who were detached from the main force. In a village on the way to Paoting-fu, for instance, through which a body of Germans had just passed, three girls were taken by our troops out of a well, into which they had been thrown before the Germans left. They were still alive. This method of disposing of their victims was frequently adopted by the soldiers as the safest way of hiding their misdeeds and escaping the consequences.

News travels fast in China, and in advance of our march the people seemed to be thoroughly aware of the fate that probably awaited them. Although nearly the whole population cleared off before our advance,

there were many, especially women, who could not get away, and who were unable to travel with their tiny compressed feet except in carts or on the backs of their servants. And it was principally these who finally, in the last extremity, committed suicide.

As the Chinese have agreed to erect a monument to Baron von Ketteler in Peking in commemorative apology for his murder, it appears to me that there is an opportunity for the Allies to erect one also. It might be of pure white jade, which the Chinese women love, which in its translucent depths seems to hold the bright Eastern sunlight with the detaining lingerage of a caress, and might bear an inscription saying that it was erected in honour of the memory of the women and girls of the province of Pechili who had sacrificed their lives to save their honour.

All the way from the sea to Peking, and for miles around Peking itself, the whole country was deserted by the inhabitants. A wave of fear and horror preceded the advent

of the Allies to such an extent that hundreds of miles of what was the most thickly populated part of China was absolutely deserted. After the relief of the Legations, the people who ventured timorously to return were inspired with fresh fear owing to the conduct of the Germans, who made up for being late for the original expedition by availing themselves of every possible opportunity of starting punitive expeditions on any possible pretence. Coming at the time of the autumn harvest, the actual loss of money to the inhabitants has been enormous.

From August to November a great tract of country was left deserted by the inhabitants, who should have been employed in gathering in the harvest. When I came down from Peking in November there was no sign whatever of life across the plains on either side as far as the eye could reach. Thousands of acres of millet lay prone on the ground, and their carefully-tended vegetable gardens were scored with black lines, showing where the produce had rotted.

When the Germans arrived in September I heard one of their officers saying to Major Scott, who was in charge of the river station at Tung-Chow, pointing to the fields of millet which surrounded the camp, "Why don't you burn down all these crops?" Major Scott replied that, besides not wanting to make life harder for these unfortunate farmers, they wanted the fodder for their own cattle. But, as a matter of fact, the destruction effected by the absence of the people was just as great as if the wish of that German had been carried out.

In all the discussions of the question of the amount of indemnity we never hear anything of the amount of counterclaim which the Chinese might rightfully make against us. The greater part of all this destruction was absolutely contrary to every rule of civilised warfare. In a district of about the extent of from London to Oxford the inhabitants have lost the entire produce of the harvest, all the villages and towns on either side of the river have been burned, so

that on the march up our path at night was literally torch-lit with burning villages.

As was natural to expect, and as we have subsequently learned, many of the inhabitants have been forced by the absolute necessities of subsistence to band themselves together in companies of brigands, whose depredations afford a fresh excuse to the Germans for continuing hostile operations. The losses inflicted on the country in this way are entirely outside the irreparable losses which were inflicted by the destruction and despoiling of temples and innumerable works of art which it will be impossible to replace. As regards these last outrages, there was no officer in command of any section of the Allies who personally exerted himself to a greater degree for the preservation, or at least to prevent the destruction, of the art heirlooms of the country than did General Sir Alfred Gaselee.

Some curious things happened in his efforts in this direction. On the Paoting-fu expedition, for instance, when the troops

were to pass in the neighbourhood of the Imperial Tombs, a few British soldiers were sent on in advance, and quietly informed the custodians that the Germans were coming. Readily acting on the information, they removed all the jewels and easily portable valuables from the tombs, and they were kept concealed in a village on the other side of the hill under the guard of a few Bengal Lancers until the Germans had passed. In recognition of this friendly message the Chinese wanted to make a present of some magnificent strings of pearls to Captain Maxwell, a nephew of Lord Roberts.

In civilised warfare there is generally some little respect shown for the priests and places of worship of the conquered people, but here there was none whatever. Horses were stabled in the temples, and the art heirlooms of thousands of years of the nation's life to be found therein were frequently mutilated and destroyed when they were not stolen. In the street where I lived in Pekin for a whole week were to be seen, day by day,

carts passing backwards and forwards laden with books which were being brought to be consumed in a huge fire kept burning in a yard outside the palace wall. Thousands of books were thus treated, so that the whole street was littered with their fluttering leaves to such an extent that I could not get my little Chinese pony to pass there without getting off and leading him, for he shied continually at the fluttering papers. Day after day this literary holocaust continued. When the wind was in the direction of my house a fine black snow kept perpetually falling, and covered the roofs and courtyards with these ashes of dead thoughts. Hundreds of the books were written in the quaint characters which showed ~~that~~ they belonged to, and were written by, Lama priests; many of them had probably found their way there from the bleak steppes of far Tibet.

They were printed with those wooden blocks by which these barbarians practised the art of printing for centuries before the

time of Caxton. Many of them also were in manuscript, which must have meant years of labour, and hand-painted pictures illustrating some were occasionally to be found. They were all alike consigned to the same funeral pyre, and thousands of volumes of unascertained, but perhaps considerable, value were thus lost to the world for ever. As the bleak, cold winds from the plains swept down the deserted street at night, and moaned dolorously through the ruined houses, rattling doors, and flapping paper windows, it lifted these torn book-leaves, and swirled them round in a fantastic dance of death, until one could almost imagine one heard the lamentation of the ghosts of their long-dead authors—priests, hermits, and scholars—mourning over the ashes of their life-work.

The whole of this campaign is the reverse of flattering to our Western civilisation. Many of the details of the conduct of the Russian, French, and German soldiers do not bear publication. But what it broadly

amounts to is the treatment of a venerable civilisation absolutely foreign to our own as if its members belonged to a low class of pestiferous beasts whose most desirable fate would be extermination.

VIII

CERTAIN COMPARISONS

AFTER spending five months with the British forces in the early part of the war in the Transvaal, and then having an opportunity of campaigning with the allied forces in China, it was extremely interesting to make comparisons between them. The greater number of the troops we employed in China were drawn from the Army of India. As regards the French forces, they, at all events during the original march to the relief of the Legations, were drawn from the troops which were stationed at Tonkin. But the French troops that subsequently arrived direct from France, as well as the German contingent, may naturally be taken as average samples of their respective armies.

It is true that outside the siege of Tientsin there was very little serious fighting. The engagements on the march up were not severe ones, except that outside the eastern gate of Peking itself. The action here, however, was entirely confined to the Japanese. If this campaign did not afford opportunities of observing the various troops under severe strain of battle, it made up for it in a way by testing their qualities, resources, and equipment for campaigning under exceptionally trying circumstances. The weather during August, when the march for the relief took place, was exceptionally hot, far surpassing anything that I experienced in South Africa. The roads, where there were any that might be dignified by that name, were extremely bad, the dust was intense, the supply of water of the most inferior quality, and the expedition, not being under the command of one general, added irksome difficulties by the uncertainty of the movements of its constituent parts from day to day.

Fighting is not the sole duty of soldiers in the field, and in almost all their other duties apart from that we had ample and varied opportunities of contrasting their merits. The Japanese infantry were a surprise and a revelation to most of the Allies. Notwithstanding the enormous trouble they have taken with their cavalry, it is immensely inferior to every other arm of their service. This is not to be wondered at when we reflect how little the Japanese are accustomed to horse-riding at home, and what small opportunities they have of acquiring that knowledge of the management of horses which comes instinctively to the English groom, to the Irish farmer's son, or to the field labourer. The defect of a want of efficient cavalry is with the Japanese largely compensated for by the extreme mobility of their infantry. They appear to do everything at the double. All their soldiers seem to be perpetually kept in the best of hard training. If they have not horses at home, they have plenty of rickshaw men, who

consider thirty to thirty-five miles of running not an excessive day's work.

Often watching the Japanese manœuvring in the field, it occurred to me that if the men of her entire army had not served an apprenticeship between the shafts of the rickshaw, they must at least have passed through some training equally severe. On the expedition to Peking they carried with them a number of light calibre guns, which they pulled into action, without horses, right into the firing line. In every detail of their camp equipment, food-supply, and field hospital corps, there was a neatness of packing and arrangement which apparently resulted in their carrying all their requirements in about a third less space than any of the others. The simple fare of the Japanese soldiers was ideal for campaigning. Broadly speaking, it consists of rice, with what might be called a flavouring of strong-tasting dried fish and mysterious brown condiments suggestive of curry. As they have modelled their fleet on our own, so

they have drawn from the French and German armies a selection of their uniform and equipment. The colour of their uniform at home is dark blue. But during the expedition to Peking their uniform was white, which would have been murderously conspicuous in operations against any force that was composed of less bad marksmen than the Chinese. This is now to be abandoned, and is to be replaced by something in the nature of khaki, as will be the heavy round German caps by something in the nature of straw hats or helmets, which will give more protection against the sun, although not looking so smart.

Although the officers of all the Allies were immensely struck by the discipline and equipment of the Japanese, close observers were still more attracted by the underlying soldier spirit which animates them. An inherent spirit of soldiering seems to possess every little Jap as a natural heritage. They seem to love fighting for fighting's sake. They appear to enjoy the whole thing like

schoolboys do their games. They take their killing much more kindly than the others, and appear to be much more familiarised with the idea that it is part of the game. Indeed, there is a zest and a verve and go about them when in action that I have never seen in any other troops. There were numerous instances in the siege of Tientsin of disregard of death. And outside the gates of Peking ten men who were killed in their attempts to blow it up might apparently have been indefinitely multiplied at the command of their officers without any danger of faltering. When at ten o'clock at night they advanced to take the gate by assault which they had failed to force in the morning, it was immensely attractive to observe the gaiety, almost amounting to hilarity, with which they advanced to the attack. All movements such as this they accompany with singing. And after forcing the gate, when they met with opposition going along the wall and had to lie down before a hot fire from the Chinese, who



BOER SHELL BURSTING AMONG THE LANCERS AT RIEI FONT EYN.

made a final stand about half a mile from the gate, the Japanese buglers stood up and played some of their quaint war-songs.

At night, in the camps on the way up, what I had mistaken for some Buddhist evening prayer, when the soldiers tramped round like a human prayer-wheel, was, I subsequently discovered, the chanting of a war-song which had been composed by General Fukushima himself.

The interesting thing to observe will be to see how the Japanese behave when they are getting the worst of it, how they will conduct themselves when they are outnumbered, or when under the strain of a losing fight. From a sporting standpoint, I'll be inclined to lay six to four on a Japanese against a Russian regiment. I met some people on the way to Peking who regarded the Russians as the best war soldiers of the lot. The Russians were intensely like the preconceived idea one is inclined to form of Russians. Solid, deep-chested, heavy and hardy, they gave one

the idea of big, heavy farm labourers with a rifle instead of a spade upon their shoulders. They never moved with anything like the quickness which characterised the Japanese, yet they plodded on with a dour stubbornness which gave the impression that if their movements were not quick, they represented a weighty momentum difficult to arrest. Although uncouth, and frequently savage in their behaviour, they yielded a child-like, or almost slavish, obedience to their officers, and on these officers should lie the blame of the innumerable outrages committed by them, from which they might have been restrained if kept properly under control.

Of the many tips which one force got from another, the Russians had an admirable system of carrying with them on the march a sort of locomotive kitchen, which consisted of a huge cauldron underneath which was a coal fire. The contents of the cauldron, which appeared to be the Russian equivalent for Irish stew, were hot and ready for the men at any halt in the march. How delightful

such an institution would have been to Tommy in the miserably cold hours between two and four o'clock on the veldt of a South African morning !

As regards the French force on the expedition to Peking, in discipline and in equipment and the conduct of the men composing it, it was absolutely beneath contempt. Unless the art of foraging and looting can be considered soldier-like qualities, they appeared to me to lack every one.

I looked forward to seeing great things from the Germans. But I must say that I was immensely disappointed. As far as parade-ground drill was concerned they were admirable ; as the mechanical and automatic resultants of the efforts of the drill-sergeant they were possibly unequalled. But they appeared to be heavy and slow in their movements. On one little expedition outside Peking for the purpose of surrounding a body of Boxers, which was undertaken by a combined force of British, Americans, Japanese, and Germans, the encircling movement proved

a failure owing to the Germans arriving an hour late at their appointed position. Discussing the Germans one day with a Japanese officer, his criticism on them was, "Very good soldiers, but I tink too much drill drill."

If the Germans suffer from too much mechanical "drill drill," the Americans certainly suffer from the opposite. Self-reliance, independence, and individuality of action are all very desirable qualities, but the Americans suffer immensely from the want of discipline and drill. Perhaps the democratic feeling of the States does not lend itself so easily to discipline. Each one of Napoleon's soldiers was supposed to carry a marshal's bâton in his knapsack. The American soldier has taken it therefrom, and is rather inclined to be a marshal unto himself, thinks himself quite as good as his superior officer, if not better, and, more than any other soldier, is given to grumbling, and spends a lot of his attention, which should be concentrated on merely obeying, to expressing his individual opinion. The United States soldiers are far

and away the best fed in the world. Their standard of comfort, not to say luxury, is immensely higher, and would be absolutely ruinous in an army the size of any of those of Europe.

Comparing the various forces—as I had an opportunity of observing them in China—with those of our own in South Africa, I am filled with a much higher idea of the latter than before I had such a standard of comparison. Our army, composed as it is in part of Colonial regiments, is now a combination of various admirable qualifications. The resourcefulness and individuality of action, which is the most admirable thing to be found in the American army, was quite equalled by men who composed such regiments as the Imperial Light Horse, the South African Horse, Brabant's Horse, the New Zealanders, and the Canadians.

The inspiring, ingrained fighting spirit of the Japs is to be found in the Irish regiments, who are probably the best fighting men in the world ; the chivalrous gallantry of artillery

in action, which Zola wrote of in *La Débâcle*, I saw in quivering vitality at Elandslaagte and Rietfontein, and not by the hastening of a step was the old tradition of our artillery (to go into action at a gallop and come out at a walk) forgotten in actions outside Ladysmith. Superior-speaking, long-range critics talk disparagingly of our soldiers in the Transvaal. Germans talk of how things should have been done, forgetting that the little expedition they sent out to China was kept waiting for a month at Tientsin before the men could start for Paoting-fu, owing to the non-arrival of some essentials of their equipment.

Far be it from me to think of posing as a military expert or a sort of composite military *attaché* to the allied forces. I speak merely as an observant outsider. In riding to hounds one soon learns the men one would select to ride against the pick of another pack. One feels in his "innards" the man he would like to go tiger-shooting with, although it would be another matter to

put down his reasons in writing, and much more so with soldiers in the field.

From what I have seen in South Africa and China, I feel and know it—luminously know it in the marrow of my intelligence—that for that South African job, if it were to be done over again, I would select the British ; that they have done, not alone as well, but better than any other nation would have done. Many things might have been done better. But apart from the question of transport, when I saw the others there were everywhere signs of their probable failures being infinitely more numerous.

There are only two armies that, granted the possibility of their being landed in South Africa, could have conceivably tackled the job. These are the Japanese and the Germans. The Japs would probably have failed from their want of efficient mounted infantry or cavalry ; the beer-blown Germans would have been worn down by men of better physical training. The war-knowledgeable brain, looking out through spectacled eyes,

would droop tired in its physical limbèr until it was brought on a level with the less scientific but more practical weapon of the polo-playing, cricketing, footballing British officer.

The Chinese had reached that ideal which we, at the end of the past century, were making an initial attempt to attain to in the calling together of the Hague Conference. For they had reached the stage of advanced development where the pen is really mightier than the sword—where the highest class in the community is that of the scholar, the next that of the man who tills the soil, and the last that of the man whose occupation it is to kill his fellow-man. Thus the Orientals were naturally at the mercy of the Western countries, the largest expenditure of whose revenue is absorbed by the cost of killing-machines and men to work them.

The Chinese have a saying that, as the best iron is not made into nails, so the best men are not made into soldiers. With our Western civilisation, the best men and steel

and soldiers found them an easy victim. There are no people in the world who have a higher regard for abstract justice and right than the Chinese. It is admitted by every man who has had large commercial dealings with them that there are no people who have a greater regard for straightforward, honest dealing. In our dealings with them, as regards this campaign, right and justice in every case have given place to might.

When the German officer I have referred to above pointed towards the fields of millet which he wished to have burned, I was strikingly reminded of a certain mysterious picture which some years ago had been inspired or drawn by his Emperor and Kaiser. It had been called by some "The Yellow Peril," and depicts the figure of Germania, surrounded by the nations of Europe, standing on a pinnacle, and pointing to a broad plain below traversed by a river, and from the plain volumes of smoke rose skywards. No one seemed to know quite definitely what the actual meaning of the

picture was. But since this latest 'crusade towards Peking, the real meaning of it is suggested. In this campaign of revenge, with the Germans as the leading performers in it, animated and inspired by the speeches of their Emperor, the picture, now illustrative of recent history, might bear a more actual meaning.

“ And Cæsar's spirit raging for revenge,
With Até by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry ‘ Havoc ! ’ and let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.”

IX

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

It was the garden of the Mission of Peitang. Not a blade of grass was showing above the ground. The roots of the grass itself had been torn up, eaten by the last few starving animals within the besieged compound before they had been killed, and the trees were absolutely stripped of their bark as high as the beasts could reach. At one side of the garden a great open crater, fringed with the ruins of buildings, showed where a mine had exploded. The cross on the Cathedral hard by was broken, and its Gothic architecture additionally fretted by the scoring marks of shot and shell. But I think nothing told more

forcibly the tale of the ordeal through which the garrison had passed than did these gnawed, naked tree-trunks.

I was shown round the day after its relief by one of the Sisters, which, by the way, was effected by the Japanese, but not until the third day after the Legations had been relieved, although it was only twenty minutes' ride distant from them. The Mother Superior, seventy-four years of age, who had spent thirty-eight years of her life in Chinese mission work, lay dying—a daughter of Count Barais, of Château Barais, near Bordeaux. She had belonged to the Order of Sisters of Charity since her eighteenth year. Three mines had exploded within the Mission enclosure, and walls and roofs were riddled and lay tossed about in grotesque confusion. I went into the Cathedral church, which they were using as a hospital.

Coming from the glare of white light outside, it was some moments before I could distinguish anything in the gloom within.

By degrees one made out rows of rounded forms of little children lying on the floor. Above, the stained-glass windows were broken in many places, and the roof perforated where shells had entered, letting in shafts of light that fell aslant the gloom. High up on the wall one lit up a figure of Christ that with bowed head and extended, nail-pierced hands seemed to point in eloquent silence to the little suffering children below. The entire floor of the church, even up to the extinguished lamp of the sanctuary, was occupied with them. In one explosion alone eighty children were killed, and a still greater number injured. Many more were ailing for want of sufficient food, because when the actual relief came they had been reduced to only two ounces of rice per day, and had but two days' rations left. Other children, who were helping the nuns, moved noiselessly about among the prostrate forms. The hushed silence of sanctuary was broken only by low moaning, or the querulous sobbing of

little children weary with pain. The Sister brought me to see one little mite, whom she called the "first fruit" of their recommenced labour.

It was a strange story, that of this little child. The French soldiers who occupied that quarter of the city had come across a house where, stretched on the kang side by side, were the bodies of all its occupants. They had committed suicide on the advent of the Allies. As the soldiers had not time to bury them immediately, intent as they were on pillaging and looting the neighbourhood, they threw lime on the bodies. After two days, when they came to throw their remains into a pit which had been dug for their burial, they found that the youngest victim was yet alive, and carried her, with her hair still caked with lime, to the nuns.

In the midst of these ruins these good women, mostly of gentle birth, were striving to recommence their labours, and nurse, and feed, and teach the children that

remained. But, conversing with them, one perceived, underlying their heroic resignation, a strain of very human despondency and disappointment. Their talk here was not of compensation. It was merely of how they could get their ruined mission-house fit for work again—the work for which they had left father and mother and friends, and their homes in far-off France.

It was not quite the same elsewhere, however. There were some missionaries who appeared to take a different view of the situation. Already they were lodging claims with their respective Consuls, and in order to guard themselves against the dilatoriness or uncertainty of action of their various Governments they were taking measures to secure immediate compensation.

One reverend gentleman, for instance, was to be seen day after day holding a sale of loot in a house that he had taken possession of. Another, an American, was carrying on a similar sale in a palatial mansion which he had commandeered. The latter was to be

seen surrounded by jade and porcelain vases, costly embroideries from the spoiled temples, sable cloaks and various other furs, and rows of Buddhas arranged like wild-fowl in a poulterer's shop. As his stock became depleted he was in a position to ask any unsatisfied customer to call in again, as his converts were bringing in fresh supplies of loot almost every day !

Indeed, not satisfied with the proceeds of his loot sale, this worthy man was enterprising enough to levy compensation on the Chinese, and, in addition to recovering the full value of the damage sustained by his converts, inflicted fines that exceeded that amount—according to his own admission—by one-third.

There are others who took possession of Chinese houses wholesale, and found a source of income in letting or leasing them. The fact of their having a number of converts to support was given by them as a justification of their actions. Unquestionably they had a large number more or less



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dependent upon them, but some other means might surely have been found. They were very busy in those days. And perhaps that accounts for their taking no notice of the actions of various portions of the Allied soldiery. Wholesale robbery, cruelty, and the raping of women were going on all round; a regular orgy of rapine surged through the captured city. Yet not one solitary voice of protest was heard.

It would be gratifying to think that, amidst all these exponents of the doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount, there was one who called for mercy on the conquered, or asked that even common humanity should be shown them, or even reminded the generals of their own rules of war and fair fighting, or who raised his voice for justice, even if he did not in compassion. What an opportunity lost, which would not have been thrown away on the Chinese, of showing in practice what they had been preaching—"Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them: that

despitefully use you." If, instead of selling images of Buddha, they had used their influence to preserve his temples from desecration and defilement, or offered sanctuary to his priests, it is certain that they would have more materially furthered the cause they have in hand.

It would be wrong to say that not one solitary voice was raised. 'Tis true it was not raised by any missionary. But there is a rough-looking soldier with a strong face that looks as if it had been hewn out of a block of red sandstone with a blunt hatchet—General Chaffee, of the United States Army. He would be called in England a "ranker." He, not content, as Sir Alfred Gaselee was, with keeping his own men from disgracing their country's flag, wrote a letter of remonstrance to Count Waldersee, and received a snub in return for an action which, nevertheless, redounds immensely to his credit.

Christianity in China has received a staggering blow, from which it will not

recover during the lives of the present generation. Its progress, so far as any one can see, in the immediate future is at an end. It is even questionable whether it will not be wiped out altogether in Northern China. The terrible assaults by Boxers will largely decrease the number of converts. The temporal advantages that formerly ensued from its profession are now more than counterbalanced by the hatred and persecution that Christianity entails. The worst blow it has received has been through the conduct of the Allied soldiery during the late invasion. These men have crucified it in China as truly as the soldiers of Pilate did its Founder. And even the Christian missionaries raised no protest against the crucifixion.

Let us hear what a Chinaman says in a book just published, the author writing under the name of "Wen Ching." I heard the identical opinions expressed by many intellectual Chinese.

"For their gifts," he says, "to the West

in the shape of silk, tea, and the magnetic compass, the Chinese have so far in return received opium, missionaries, and bombardment." "The *literati*, the backbone of China . . . are not kindly spoken of by missionaries, nor are they liked by foreigners."

It is only "the lower orders that have always been very susceptible to the teaching of foreigners. Their ignorance and their poverty furnish ample reasons for their willingness to join the churches of the Europeans."

Also "the claims of missionaries to a right of travel and residence in the interior . . . are founded on no higher authority than an interpolation by a missionary translator into the Chinese text of the treaty between France and China." That "the disturbance of a local *fengshui* by a church spire is considered as much of a grievance as the erection of a hideous tannery beside Westminster Abbey would be."

He says that "the Christian religion

spread chiefly, if not entirely, among the poorer people, until it was discovered that political advantages accrued to the convert." For "in many places the missionary intrudes himself into the Chinese court, and sits beside the magistrate to hear a case between his convert and a non-Christian native. The influence of the missionary is very great, and the official is often pestered and worried by the messengers of the Gospel." Therefore the Christian converts are voted a "source of trouble and a nuisance." •

Still, in this writer's opinion, "nothing has done so much harm to the cause of the missionary as this forcing the opium trade on the people." "If there are honest missionaries," he remarks, "there are also sincere believers in the ancient faiths of Cathay to resent the insidious encroachments of blatant foreign priests, who preach to the heathen the doctrines of self-imposed poverty and mendicancy, and yet themselves live sumptuously enough in comfortable houses, surrounded by a wife and a numerous

progeny, in the midst of heathen squalor and misery."

These are just a few extracts from the views of an intelligent Chinaman as regards the question of missionaries in his country. But in conversation with others I heard similar opinions more forcibly put. They point out that the various exponents of Christianity insist that each alone expounds the right version, which is puzzling to the Chinese, and that the missionaries actually have not agreed as to the name of their God, as they use five different characters.

Within the radius of an eighteen-penny cab fare from where I write, I think there is plenty of spiritually productive work for all the missionaries in China; work for all the sincere, self-sacrificing missionaries—and there are still many of them in China—men animated by the spirit of the Twelve Fishermen, who have not adopted their profession as a means of livelihood, in addition to a secure income getting an extra £30 for every baby born in their families. And

within the radius I speak of, they would not first have the task of weaning the people away from the doctrines of Confucius or Buddha—"Him all wisest, best, most pitiful, whose lips comfort the world," which doctrines are the very breathing—the life—of their social as well as spiritual being. When the Chinese see the German Emperor using missionaries as live-bait to catch a province, and the French insisting upon being given another as the price of a few members of one of those religious orders they have expelled from France, it is no wonder that from that stricken, bullied, cheated people the cry goes up to the empty heavens—

"To my own Gods I go.
It may be they shall give me greater ease
Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities."

X

EX ORIENTE LUX

WHAT is a barbarian? In many of the Chinese edicts we see the term perpetually applied to those people outside the Celestial Kingdom, and to all those who are not Chinese. The Japanese are far too polite to use such a word. Yet I have spoken to Japanese artists who, in referring to European taste in Art, used a word equivalent to barbarous. The average free-born Briton travelling round the world carries with him, or is supposed to carry with him, his Bible, and a taste for Bass's beer and beefsteak. According as a country does or does not possess these essentials, and according as its own attributes of civilisation are removed from his own standards of

perfection, so does he regard its inhabitants as more or less barbarians. (I was rather amused watching a play in Tokio once, where the villain of the piece was a red-whiskered Englishman, in a loud crossbar suit and a fore-and-aft cap, who was always shown on the stage with half a dozen bottles of Bass on a table beside him.) When we bear in mind how much Britishers despise their next-door neighbours across the Channel for their defective beefsteakialities, it is not surprising that such a feeling should be greatly intensified when they come in contact with a civilisation so much more alien and remote from their own as that of China and Japan. It needs only a quiet observation and the smallest degree of intellectual elasticity to be forced to the conclusion that the advantages are not altogether on our side, and that there is great scope for the East to send social missionaries to the West. Socially, I think we have far more to learn from them than they have to learn from us. And, curiously enough, if such a mission were

started, it would not be entirely to teach us new things, but in many ways it would be recalling us to points which we have hurried away from in the rapid progress of our material civilisation for the last couple of hundred years.

The central idea, the social pivot, the focus of the life, of the civilisation of the East is to be found in their idea of the home. The home is the centre of gravity of their existence, round which everything else revolves. In China it is the all-pervading, all-vivifying idea of social life, of religion, and of government. The life of the family is not only of to-day, but extends back into a venerable past, and is the hope and care of the future.

For us, the dead past buries its dead, and the flowers that we lay on the newly-made grave quickly wither on the freshly-turned clay on which we have left them—except where the place of natural ones is taken by those deliciously ironical representations in the shape of tin—waterproof imitations

which save the mourner the trouble of renewal.

As to the love of the Chinese and Japanese for their children, it has to be seen to be appreciated. Those wise-eyed little mites, who before they can walk sit perpetually enthroned upon their mothers' backs throughout the livelong day, are a source of so much joy and adoration to their parents that one feels no surprise at not hearing them cry as other children do. I only recollect hearing a child cry once during a two months' stay in Japan, and then there was an excuse for its dolorous plaint, because its mother was shaving its little head with a blunt razor and no soap. It must be obvious to the student of our Western civilisation that the cult of family life is on the decline. The ties and obligations which hold children and parents together are visibly slackening, and this is the more obvious amongst those nations which have been taking the lead in the material progress of our time.

Take the United States, for instance.

There, up to a certain point, the father is regarded as the dollar-grinding machine. The tendency is for both sons and daughters to cast themselves loose from parental ties, and strike out afresh for themselves. And their parents are as little responsible for them as they are for the maintenance or happiness of their parents.*

Any one who is familiar with life in the East End of London will appreciate how little these worn-out toilers, when old age incapacitates them from work, can rely on being kept out of the Union by their children. With the experience of nearly two thousand years of the progress of Christendom, it is not surprising that a short time ago we should hear the present occupant of the Papal Throne raising his aged voice to recall the attention of the West to how rapidly the idea of the family was being lost, as Leo XIII. did in the Encyclical Address to the Catholic Church on the subject of the Holy Family.

From the more important teaching as

regards 'family life, these Oriental missionaries might then endeavour to tell us something of the Fine Arts in the East, and yet more of the spirit which animates their artists. They would be able to show us that "art for art's sake" with them is no empty phrase. It would doubtless surprise many Westerners' to know that a Chinese painter would not think of selling his pictures for money, but paints them for his own pleasure, and gives his work as presents to his friends, and would no more dream of selling a picture than an English girl would of selling a kiss.

The Japanese would have a lot to tell us about bringing art, and that their highest and best art, into the utensils of everyday life, and that there is nothing demeaning in expending the best work on things one handles and uses every day. What a lot they would have to tell us of the cultivation and their love of flowers—a love which seems instinct in the poorest peasant, and which in the more cultivated classes is carried to an

exquisite degree of refined development! And again, a Japanese incense party, where different qualities of delicately aromatic incense are passed round—and the pastime consists in placing the different qualities in the order of the beauty of their perfume—would almost suggest that the West had neglected the cultivation of one of the five senses.

At a dinner-party at a well-known restaurant, the other night, it was forcibly brought to my mind what a lot they would have to teach us regarding the enjoyment of such social functions. A perfect din and rattle of plates and knives filled the air, a mob of undisciplined servants charged about tumultuously, garish lights lit up vulgar ornamentation, and one almost had to shout to be heard across the table, while a band of music outside ineffectually endeavoured to drown the din within. There were flowers, it is true, but their profusion was no compensation for an utter lack of artistic arrangement. But there was a complete

absence of that repose, that restfulness, that calm, which is considered, and justly considered, amongst Easterns as the essential atmosphere for the enjoyment of a social repast. The Japanese have raised entertainment to the level of a fine art. Their tea ceremonies, as we have badly translated the "Cha'-no-yu," but which might be preferably rendered as "The Fine Art of Welcome and Hospitality," have been a strong influence in preventing them from drifting into the meretricious gaudiness so blatantly *en évidence* in restaurants like the Carlton, and minister to that purity and simplicity of taste which is so characteristic of Japanese art. Five is considered by them the best number for a dinner-party, as with a larger number separate conversational groups are apt to be formed. The Japanese gentleman has rooms specially built for these parties, and rooms only just large enough to hold his guests comfortably. One scroll is hung in the kakemono, and in front of it one ornament, and afterwards a solitary flower. It

would be considered by them extremely bad taste to confuse or dissipate the attention by a variety of ornaments.

A Japanese lady once showed me a photo of the drawing-room at Sandringham, which greatly amused her, and which she kept as a curiosity. (She was too polite to say as a curiosity of barbarism.) But she said, laughing, "Is it not just like a curio-dealer's shop?"

The dinner, which actually precedes the tea-drinking, is served by the host in person, thus doing away with the intrusion of even their deft and quiet-moving servants. Every cup, every plate, is an individual art treasure, from the Godown in which the host's artistic treasures are kept in a seclusion that his most intimate friends have never penetrated. They have probably never seen the same picture or the same ornament twice in the kakemono. From the soft mellow music of the old gong which summons them to the repast, on through its various stages, until the rare and beautiful bowl out of which they have had tea is passed round for appreciative



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inspection, an air of refined repose has characterised the whole proceedings.

These social missionaries might progress from giving us some insight into these things to the introduction of another institution which would be an unquestionable advantage to our civilisation—I refer to the Geisha. Supposing that they were successful in grafting this Japanese idea, the Western edition would work out somewhat thuswise. Take, for instance, a bachelor coming up from Oxford or Cambridge, or, say, a merchant up from Liverpool or Manchester, instead of having a solitary dinner at his club, if he wished for the relaxation of vivacious female companionship, he would go to the telephone, and ring up “Geishas, Limited,” and send word that he wanted one, or more, for dinner that evening. There would in due course, at the restaurant appointed, appear a girl with the dress, appearance, and manners of a lady. Whatever her looks might be, whatever her attractions, she would unfailingly be bright, intelligent,

well-mannered, and, above all, entertaining, for her being entertaining would be her *métier*, her occupation, her *raison d'être*. And, contrary to what is frequently supposed from a mistaken acquaintance with this Japanese institution, she would not be in the least facile or accessible. Our ideas of feminine Japan are too much based on the circumscribed experiences of holiday travellers, or books of the bad taste of Pierre Loti's "Madame Chrysanthème." We do not judge the women of England by Leicester Square, nor of Paris by those of the Moulin Rouge. Amongst the accomplishments of these Geisha girls music and singing would be most important. There seems much more refinement and comfort in bringing the music and singing to you than in going to the singing and music. A party of men dining together would not be driven to adjourn to a music-hall after dinner. They could order it as part of the menu.

But these Oriental missionaries, in addition

to introducing such an institution, would have a field for their labours in raising their clients and customers to the standard of Japanese civilisation in the enjoyment of it. I present the idea gratis to any enterprising people who are troubled with the question, What to do with our girls!

But Orientals would have little to teach us in what the Chinese call "make face," which enters into many of the actions of our daily life quite as much as it does into theirs. How thankful we should be that it does not also enter into our religious life! How thoroughly the Chinese must be impressed with this by their recent experiences of our Latest Crusaders! I was listening the other day to a gentleman descanting "on the darkness that enveloped those Pagan barbarians," and I was thinking of another darkness or blindness which prevented the speaker, and many like him, from seeing the least gleam of light in the East. Yet it does not require much hand-shading of our intellectual eyes to see EX ORIENTE LUX.

XI

NIGHT IN THE CITY OF UNREST

“How beautiful is night !
A dewy freshness fills the silent air ;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain
Breaks the serene of heaven :
In full-orbed glory, yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark-blue depths.
 Beneath her steady ray
 The desert-circle spreads
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
 How beautiful is night !”

NIGHT really unrobes her beauty only in silence, the silence of the desert. Never can I forget nights spent in Western Australia, far beyond Kalgoorlie, away back in the Never-Never Land, where no rain falls. That is the land of great thirst, where for hundreds of miles one sees no living thing, where no birds sing, not even the mournful call of the jackal echoes across the waste,

and not even the chirping ticking of an insect is to be heard to break the utter stillness. Gum trees, whose roots strike down a hundred feet for water, lift up their sparsely-covered branches into the motionless air above, their tongue-like leaves silently saying "I thirst." In that stagnant air they remind one of the giant seaweeds that grow in the depths of the great oceans where the water never moves; and the silence there is the silence of ocean depths, and so has been from the beginning. To-day my horse's tracks made five years ago are probably as fresh as were those which I followed that had been made two years before that time. It must be experienced to be realised, that dead silence; when lying on the ground at night the sound of one's heart-beats or the breathing of one's horse, tethered yards away, alone tells one that the sense of hearing is not lost. It must be experienced to be loved, that wonder of a silent world, where the Spirit of Solitude in his own domain for ever almost palpably seems to

brood with finger on pressed lips. It is the contrast with the scene that lies below me that forcibly recalls these nights in the desert. Now, as I write, I am at the Antipodes; and focus points of contrast in every sense to these scenes; the same moon that shines on that far-off desert is the only thing in common.

The city of New York is in the form of a wedge, the point of the wedge being the down-town end, a great black mass that now looks driven into the moonlit water. Down here, as if with sheer weight of pressure of crowding humanity, the houses seem driven upward. There being not enough room on the end of the wedge for the people, they are forced upwards for room, as one would squeeze paint from an artist's tube. They rise up in tall, irregular-shaped shafts of various heights, as a child might stand its long toy bricks on end anyhow. As I write I am looking down from the thirtieth story of one of the highest, feeling as if I had been "set on the pinnacle of the Temple"

(of Mammon?). The great city lies below me, but though it is night it does not appear to lie in repose. If it sleeps, it is a restless, troubled sleep. The air is vocal with many noises that come up from below as an exhalation; white flames of steam wave from the tops of buildings below me. Up here on this giddy height a hot wind of the upper air is blowing, and a vibrating, murmurous throbbing pulsates through the building itself. This latter is caused by the elevators, those veins and arteries of the structure, and their motion must never cease or else a clot of humanity would be left marooned in the upper storeys. Across the river on the west side a row of lights are moving in one direction, and alongside them a row moving in the opposite, like ants at work. These are the trolly-cars crossing Brooklyn Bridge. North and south, to the sound of a jangling rattle, the trams on the Elevated are moving, and along the streets the trolly-cars, with their booming note, which crescendoes up the scale with increasing speed and diminuendoes

with the slackening of it. Out on the water the red and green lights of the steamers move about in irregular tracks. The booming, mournful call of these steamers, like the lowing of a cow for her lost calf, goes on for ever. There are times in the desert when the coyote and the jackal are silent; on forlorn coasts in the hours before the first of dawn the seagulls cease their screaming; but these voices are never silent, calling, circling, and cawing, calling around the City of Unrest. Different notes they sound—the angry scream of the steam siren, the deep boom of the incoming ocean liner, and the note one hears oftenest—a mournful, lost wail, as of a damned soul calling out, “Custos, quid de nocte?” “Custos, quid de nocte?” The feverish hours pass troublously, but there is no response in the night of the City of Unrest.

Now a great change has come over the scene; the moon has been curtained off by a heavy mass of clouds, and its light is shut off from the water. The lights of the city

shine out with increased distinctness; the moonlight that whitened the sides of the buildings now has left them black masses of vague shadow, and all at once one gets the impression of looking down into an inverted firmament studded with countless stars of as various magnitudes as in the heavens, from the bright electric arc-lights to tiny gaslights; and from this height of over 400 feet one gets the impression, familiar to those who have looked at the world from a balloon, that the rim of the horizon rises all round. "Around the circle of the desert spreads," but the desert now is of the cloud-covered sky, and far as the eye can reach are the stars of this great city, and now through that firmament of stars there is a dark path in an unilluminated Milky Way which marks the course of the river.

As one looks down from here and listens to the combination of throbbing sounds that come up from below, there is a certain impressiveness in the thought of being in the centre of such focused activity. One seems

to be pressing the ear close to the heart of a great country. I wonder what that other city looked like from the pinnacle of whose temple He looked down on the other great cities that had their day? What Carthage looked like? The present edition of Rome and Paris and London, and Pekin from the Imperial pagodas on the top of Coal Hill, I have looked down on at night, but none of them is like this. From the Capitol Rome lies quietly wrapped in the memories of past greatness; from the hill of Montmartre the electric lights here and there give suggestive glimpses of the City of Pleasure. In Pekin, looking across the lotus-pond and the marble bridges, all that is squalid in the city is shrouded in a veil of foliage, and above the tops of the trees only what is beautiful emerges, and the city sleeps in the enjoyment of thoroughly Oriental repose; and, like a solidly-built, healthy man, London sleeps soundly; but the strenuous, restless activity of this city can hardly be said to sleep. I watched it make an attempt at a

pause for five minutes on the day of the President's funeral. At an appointed time all the street traffic was supposed to stand still. My! what an effort it was! It was not a real pause; it seemed more like the gasping holding of the city's breath, holding for these five minutes as if something were going to burst; and then at the second when the clock marked the end of the five minutes on went everything spinning with a feeling of absolute relief. As one looks down from here one cannot help speculating as to what is to be the future of what lies below. Is it going to be the greatest city that the world has ever seen—in real greatness, or only in acute development of material civilisation; and are the multitudes that populate it going to get more happiness from the arcs of their little lives than those of Carthage and Rome, or Peking, or Babylon, or London? Or are they going at the pace that kills? Or at least the pace that tires into premature exhaustion?

But leaving these speculations, as it is now

one o'clock, I get into the cage of the elevator and drop down whirring as the floors toss upwards beyond me—"Down twenty-eight," and we pull up with a jerk, and a pale-faced man gets in. "Down twelve," and two tired-looking women and a small boy get on board; and then the floor on which is a newspaper office, and a crowd is waiting to descend. The paper is just going to press, and their work is done. And then right down below the level of the street I go to see the paper actually printed. Immense rolls of paper are being lowered from the street level and handled as easily as if they were of no more weight than a lead pencil, put before machines which devour them to a deafening noise of machinery. The room reminds one of the lower deck of an ironclad in action, and the workers there seem fighting for their lives—fighting against time, fighting against the machine, fighting against the paper, which would fill up the room if it were left at the discharging end of the machines without being sent rapidly aloft; and there

on the floor above the men are fighting hand to hand with great bundles of papers that must be sent out in time for the morning trains. Outside in the square stand horses sufficient for the artillery of an army corps awaiting their burdens, and as I go up town by the surface car, although there is not yet any sign of light, I pass hundreds of men on their way down town to make an early start in the battle struggle of a new day in the City of Unrest.

XII

A STREET IN THE CITY OF UNREST

IT was a very wonderful sight last night, looking down from that height at the black pool of New York specked with star-like lights—a pool of darkness, where three million people slept, or tried to sleep; but it was like looking into a cup of ink to read destinies. Now, twelve hours afterwards, let us step down below into the centre of the city, when the limelight of a glaring, cloudless sun is turned full on it—when the living microcosm of its active life is thrown on the magic-lantern screen of our retina. Now we are at the base of these high buildings, and no city in Europe can show anything like them. It is difficult to know

what to compare them to. We cannot compare Broadway to an avenue of poplars in stone, for the poplars are out of proportion to the avenue—far too high and far too irregular. There is no regular design, no continuous outline; immense, costly, new, they sprout upwards—sprout as if under the drawing-up power of a tropical sun, sprout as if fed with the superabundant fecundity of virgin soil. Unless they were as high, there would not be room for the people down at this crowded end of the wedge-shaped town. The want of finality about them is no less apparent in their irregularity of size than in their sides, generally blank of windows, in expectancy of buildings going up beside them probably higher still. Some of them are to be seen with white marble façades crowned with Corinthian pilasters, and the sides are of red or yellow brick, on which is probably some huge, ugly advertisement announcing that some fine five-cent cigar is “generously good,” or holding out hope of relief in the shape of a pill to liver-

troubled humanity. Parenthetically, I may remark that this city is, if anything, rather worse than London in the way of placards that scar the face of it. The goblin-like advertisements that spit soap and other things at unoffending eyes at night in Trafalgar Square are bad enough, but the advertisements in New York are worse still. There is a fine square here called Madison, in the centre of which trees rise from fountain-watered grass, and statued figures of people who were men in their day and did things, palatial buildings, dignifying commerce, form the square. Yet while I have been here I have watched, right over a house on one side of it, a huge white hoarding being erected, and have watched a great vulgar advertisement of cigarettes being daubed upon it. A beastly, ugly smear on one of the beauty-spots of the city.

Bang-bang; bang-bang; bang—loud, insistent; ping-ping—sharp, piercing; the first from the trolly-car, the second from a steam-trailing automobile; a booming



ARTHELY CROSSING A BRIDGE NEAR LADYSMITH.

roar from the ground accompanying the first, a buzzing rattle the second. Just a block away a far louder rattle still comes from the elevated railway. Here, down town, the streets are paved with cobble stones, and the severity of the climate in the winter is given as the excuse for the irregularity of the surface. Heavy lorries and wheels of horsed vehicles jangle over them, but the general uproar is so great that the bells on the horses' collars are inaudible, and sight is the only sense that makes their approach perceptible. The stream of trolly-cars passes and re-passes, perpetually making short pauses for the passengers to nip in quickly or—get left. Across from where I write is a restaurant with a legend above it, "Quick Lunch." This, I think, is rather peculiar to New York; in other cities it would be either "Good Lunch," or "Cheap Lunch;" here the attraction is that it is "quick." It is only necessary to watch the way that the customers hurry in and hurry out to see

the significance of it. The day is not half long enough for the workers down here, and the work is at such high pressure that time for feeding can hardly be spared ; it is not feeding or taking a meal, it is just stoking the human engine, and quick stoking at that.

The streets of London, even in the City, are calm and peaceful in comparison with those here in New York. The very ground throbs with vibration, the air throbs with the medley of noises, the buildings throb with both. It is not quite obvious why the streets should be so noisy. All the bells and gongs and danger-signals, one would think, would be equally effectual if they were not so loud, but now the competition of sounds is so great that any warning must almost be explosive in its violence to be audible at all. It is no wonder that we find in this city so many people suffering from nerves ; it is quite surprising the number of men I have met who dare not drink coffee, men who have had to give up

smoking, men and women who were too nervous to travel in a hansom, and who at frequent intervals have to retire to the country owing to various kinds of nervous trouble. There seems to be no question but that this suffering from nervous disorders is on the increase; it would be surprising if it were otherwise, considering the pace at which these people live; and when one sees thin, pallid, spectacle-wearing little children, one sees specimens of the rising generation who are destined to be still greater sufferers. As against this, and offsetting it, the taste for outdoor games seems to be on the increase, and for young business men who have little time for taking exercise nothing can be more admirable than clubs such as the athletic and the racquet clubs here, which give opportunities of taking indoor exercise on a scale unapproached by any similar institution in London.

When I left London in August and came here, it would be difficult to determine in

which city the streets were more torn up. The construction of the underground railway here is in evidence all over the city; explosions from blasting are to be heard at intervals throughout the day, and in various directions huge caverns yawn, at the bottom of which hundreds of men and steel drills are hard at work. I have noticed within the last few years how the power of the street policeman has increased for regulating traffic. In return for the potatoes which Ireland originally received from America, she has ever since been supplying this country with policemen and politicians, and these former great burly, beltless Milesians now despotically rule the traffic as effectually as the London bobbies. It is characteristic that the youngsters about the streets should be keener, sharper, more active even than the youngsters of London. The lithe, thin, cigarette-smoking *gamins* that sell newspapers down town are a study in themselves as they dart and double through the traffic and the crowded sidewalks, selling innumer-

able editions of voluminous papers throughout the day.

Early in the morning going down town, during the luncheon hour, or going up town in the evening, one is struck by the enormous number of women workers who now find employment in this great city—in some offices hundreds of women, forming almost the entire staff, are employed. Their competition must make it harder still for the male clerks. Independent, self-reliant, business-like, a curious type is being developed of these bread-earners—a type that suggests the evolution of a neutral sex. Perhaps it is not altogether to be wondered at, and is only a manifestation of the idea of equality, that in the down-town cars the man no longer gives up his seat to the woman who stands holding on to the leather strap over her head in the crowded car, and does not remove his hat in the elevator when a woman enters.

Now a black-plumed vehicle comes spinning round the street corner, followed by

three or four carriages with the 'crape-wearing drivers: apparently it is only the denseness of the traffic that prevents the hearse galloping and compels the driver to be content with a quick trot. Quick lunch, rapid life, fast funeral, devouring cremation, or else the weary toiler is laid down to have a first try at a real long sleep in the quivering bosom of the City of Unrest.

XIII

A GLIMPSE OF A SOUTHERN CITY

EVERY variety of climate, pace, and people is to be found in this great tract of country which has for its flag the Stars and Stripes, and any variety of taste ought to be capable of being gratified within its confines. If I were to come to live on this side of the Atlantic I think I should elect to settle in a Southern city. New York has many attractions; it has drawn to it, vortex-like, much of the best that is bright, able, active, powerful,* but, vortex-like, the life swirls, spinning ceaselessly at a terrific rate, in that noisy city of unrest. Chicago accentuates the worst features of life in New York while having few of its compensations, and the large cities in the East and centre are blends of the life of both diluted with dulness. San

Francisco is a thing apart—the air of the Pacific seems to blow different impulses on the people, and great and glorious air and climate and scenery are there, bracing with the breeziness of the West. Florida and the shores of the Gulf of Mexico are too near the tropics for my taste, tending towards hammock-basking too much.

Give me a Southern city, say in Georgia ; and I have one in my mind's eye. There the people do not live so fast as to have no time to enjoy their life, while they have all that makes life enjoyable. Successful effort is my nearest approach to a definition of what constitutes happiness. There there is every scope for various effort. The city and country around are still in process of active growth. "Fecundity" is writ large across the surface of the State, on fields, in mills, in mines. All the men are busy the livelong day. Here it is different from in England; you do not find a large section of men who spend the day either at various kinds of sport, at cricket, or loitering listlessly about

the clubs. An idle man would be a solitary of his own sex. But it is not the material conditions that constitute the chief attraction of life in a Southern city, excellent as they are; the principal charm of the South is the character of the people themselves. There is 'an undefined flavour of old-world politeness and courtesy perfuming their environment. The bow of a Southern gentleman does not appear to be the jerk of a string-pull; it suggests having been learned remotely from the bow that brought the sword projecting through the long coat-tails as the hat was removed from the powdered wig.

There is an indefinite something that tells one that all these people have had grandfathers and grandmothers, instead of as in New York, where the suggestion is that they are the offspring of stock-market tickers or have been shot into the world through a pneumatic tube.

That almost universal formula in America on a man being introduced bears here a real significance, "I am glad to meet you, Mr.

Blank." The English equivalent is "How-d-do?" and, although inarticulate, there is frequently a silent suggestion of the phrase, "Bored to meet you," "Awfully bored to meet you." In the South they are glad to meet and welcome the stranger at their gates, and he must be hard to please if he does not have a good time within them.

The general rule that the men are at work all day has its effect in various ways on the life of the community. The social life differs from that of England in many marked features, in none more than in the part played by the Southern girl. At the first reception given by the mother of the young *débutante*, the men of the set in which she is to move are presented to her, and tacitly it is a presentation to them, by the mother, of what she holds most tenderly precious; to them, in trust in their honour, in full confidence in their courtesy, and, although their hearts are covered with the immaculate shirt-front of latter-day conventionality, with as full reliance on knightly

service as if that stiff shirt were the armour of the day of chivalry. This social feature or condition of things strikes me as especially admirable. It strikes me as so infinitely preferable to the constant espionage of chaperonage, so much more above-board and honourable towards both the young men and girls alike. They can go driving, to a theatre—where boxes are much more open and less like bathing-machines than ours—to lunch in the big club-room—an annexe to the exclusively male portion to which ladies are admitted—and will be driven to and from a dance, and will receive afternoon calls without a chaperon. Results point overwhelmingly to its success from every point of view. A breach of that code of conduct which needs not to be written would mean eternal social damnation. It is being perpetually borne in on me what a much better time the American girl has than our English sisters, and in many ways she deserves to have it so. If the man keeps horses and carriages so that he may take her out for drives in the

afternoon, bring her to the théâtre, take her to and from dances, if he keeps her supplied with flowers to an extent unknown Englandwards, if he is constantly giving dinner-parties and supper-parties for her, it is because she is worthy of it all and more.

To begin with, she is never *blasée*; and, thank goodness, it is not yet considered in America "good form" to appear *blasé*, even if one is not. Being full of interest and constantly *au courant* with events, she is always companionable, and is able to talk intelligently of many things. Being gifted with a heaven-sent sense of humour, she is never dull; and what closer bond of social sympathy is there than a sense of humour in common? In conversational fence the thrust and parry of her play is as quick and keen as her touch is true and light, and through it all ripples a sunny Southern gaiety that is as fond of giving pleasure or amusement as she is readily susceptible of either. But be not tempted in this summer region, O wanderer from the chilly North, to wear your

heart upon your sleeve for the sun to shine on, or else she will pluck it off, saying, with laughing eyes, that it is no place for it, and she will put it with a row of probably half a dozen already on hers, and from time to time she will pick morsels from it at her pleasure; and the reason that it does not hurt more is because of the prettiness of her lips.

It is when one meets the mothers of these girls that one sees whence comes their charm; an old-world queenliness of motherhood, mingling with warm-hearted cordiality, renders them immediately as lovable as their daughters.

The billion-dollar trust is very adollarable, and so is the Tobacco and Standard Oil and the rest; but in the assets of the nation, more valuable, to my mind, is the heirloom of the tradition of gentle manners and cordial kindness held so well in trust by the people of that city of the South.

XIV

THE PENALTY OF THEIR PACE IN THE CITY OF UNREST

A DINNER-PARTY at Sherry's—twenty people sat around a table beautiful with the choicest flowers—the room was full of diners ; there was more noise and clatter than one would hear even in the Carlton or Prince's ; and the Hungarian band was playing—seemed the suitable panting life-breath of the scene—sensuous a little—strenuous—feverishly restless. Bright, gay, quick, and keyed loudly in order to be audible, were the voices of the diners ; exchange of repartee, quick as the fire of a pom-pom, was shot and returned. Well-aimed marksmanship it was, too—no cartridges wasted. Flash of costly jewels or still brighter eyes as the shots

were sped at marks worth firing at and well capable of replying. Men who had done things were there: the senator—a great lawyer—several of America's greatest business men, and the women who had helped or spurred or hindered them, but who were all worth working for or helpfully hinderous blast-furnaces to ambition. But one seat away was a man who was one of the greatest mine-owners in America, and controlled railways that were connected and dependent on these mines. Pale and sallow, with sparse hair over his big bulging forehead, power and decision and resolution were stamped on every line of his face; a small army of men worked for him—worked underground or on railroads, or looked to him as the donor of dividends, the regulator of their incomes, the arbiter of their financial destinies.

He drank no wine at dinner, yet now and again a curious up-and-down lifting movement of the table could be traced to one of his knees, which he kept crossed over the other. He waved away the coffee with the

remark that it was years since he dared indulge in it; but when, after obviously impatient waiting, the time came when he might light a long cigar, he puffed out a stream of smoke with a sigh of relief, and the table was no longer shaken from that on. Presently some remark drew from him the reply, "No; the most desirable things in the world are health and sleep. I would give two million dollars to be able to sleep six hours each night. I would give twice that to be able to digest a good meal properly. I would give I don't know what to be able to rest, just rest quietly again."

And the lady next him said: "How well I understand that feeling! I don't see why we should be compelled to go on, on, on at that pace. Sometimes now when I have to drive in a cab I can barely keep myself from shrieking out aloud from sheer nervousness. I have not dined at home in my own house for three months except once, and that was when, in reply to a remonstrance to my daughter for going out so much, she said



NAVAL BRIGADE PASSING THROUGH LADYSMITH.

she would dine at home on Christmas Day. It is this perpetual rush, I expect, makes us so nervous ; but it is so hard to stop, even when our nerves pay the price."

* * * * *

Coming out of a newspaper office in New York I happened to meet an old friend of the Cuban war times. Paler, thinner, and more drawn his face looked in the V of his turned-up collar than when I had seen him last. After talking for a few minutes I asked him whither he was going, and found he was going to take a special kind of bath and rubbing, which was part of the treatment he was undergoing for the desperate nervous trouble he was suffering from.

"It is pretty hard lines," said he. "As you know, I never drank, and took fairly good care of myself. I have not slept more than an hour or two for the past week."

Then he told me how, going home to Brooklyn a few evenings before, the nervousness had come so badly on him that he had

to hire a boy to go with him. He could not go across the bridge alone.

"At the present moment," said he, "there are nine men in our office suffering from the same complaint."

He seemed to think that the treatment was doing little good; that doctors could do next to nothing.

"Rest, long rest, is what we want, I suppose; but how can a fellow get rest working in a big newspaper office in this city?"

* * * * *

The Remington machine had been rattling on like a Maxim gun in action, the operator taking down dictation on to the machine so quickly that it was almost as good as shorthand. It stopped suddenly, and the fragile anæmic woman who was working it laid down her hands in her lap, saying she was afraid she could not continue. In reply to the question if she was ill she said no—that it was simply she was nervous. She said she had only just returned from the country,

where she had been resting for a week—a rest that she could ill afford, but it evidently had not been long enough.

“It is terrible, especially for those who have to keep working for a living, who have to work on to keep their heads above water.”

“I suppose it is the penalty we pay for all this,” she said, looking out from the window at which she sat.

Down far below was one of the busiest squares in New York; a double line of trolly-cars perpetually running through it that clanged their bells as they swung around the corner; automobiles that pinged their warning gongs and darted in and out amongst the stream of traffic fish-like; labouring horses struggling under heavy loads; the cars packed with people like cattle, standing up and hanging from the straps in the roof, toilers coming back from work; the sidewalks crowded with hurrying people. The seats in the centre of the square held slouching figures with bent

heads, figures of dog-tired men—dog-tired with work or the looking for it. A sharp insistent clanging arose above the other sounds like a wailing scream of pain as an automobile ambulance rushed hospital-wards, carrying off one of those wounded in the struggle.

No one can quietly watch the seething life of the City of Unrest without being struck with the prevalence of nervous troubles amongst the people. Every day one meets instances. "I dare not drink coffee; I have not drunk it for years," one so often hears—then the piteous longing for sleep denied. "I am not going to any dances this winter; my doctor will not allow me, on account of my nerves," one of the most charming girls in New York said to me a few days ago. The doctors all declare that this nervousness is alarmingly on the increase, and throughout every class of the community—from those who work hardest, through the longest hours, to earn their bread, to those who work at the pursuit of

pleasure—the mad social rush of the Charge of the Four Hundred. It is obvious that this pace cannot slacken—every year adds fresh impetus. What will it be in fifty years—at the end of the century? What will the offspring of these quivering, twitching, highly strung men and women be like? *Quo vadis, Americane?*

Already there are antidotes or remedies for this growing evil—sanatoria where the worn-out over-worked are compelled to seek refuge, asylums of repose for those who have long lost the art of enjoying it. More useful, perhaps, are the facilities for getting healthy exercise which are offered by athletic clubs, gymnasias, and the squash courts and tennis courts now being laid out on the tops of so many of the best houses. But these are only trifling against the magnitude of the menacing evil. Thousands have not the time to enjoy them, and must pay the penalty of the pace of their progress in the City of Unrest.

XV

THE MILLION-MASTER IN THE CITY OF UNREST

SEVEN-THIRTY o'clock : the coffee and toast had been placed by the valet on the table beside his bed ; the warm water was already running into the bath in the adjoining room ; three suits of clothes, carefully brushed and ironed, were laid on the sofa when he was called. He seemed to be awake all of a sudden—quite awake. As he was called, a young man came into the room with a bundle of newspapers. "Let me see," said Mr. X., "I think I can take half an hour extra this morning—read away ;" and then the young man began reading rapidly from the papers. He had from long training learned to know what interested the boss,

and read selections from one paper after another which he had previously gone over—some closing prices of particular stocks first, then some foreign and general news summary, and then X. asked him to read particulars of what he wanted to learn more about. After about fifteen minutes he had had enough, and one of his secretaries, with a bundle of letters in one hand and a notebook in the other, came in. As he read the letters, X. dictated, or mostly just indicated, the replies; they were all business letters. Then his place was taken by another. His letters were mostly invitations, charitable appeals, letters from his steward and the head of his stables at Lakewood, from the skipper of his yacht, from dealers who had pictures that he ought to buy, from the caretaker of his house in Newport, and letters from house-agents in London about a house he wanted there for the Coronation. At eight he took his bath, and while drying and dressing the litany of letters and responses continued, punctuated at intervals by the bell of the

telephone on the table by his bedside, and so on through the breakfast, now laid in an adjoining study, until it was time to telephone to the stables for his automobile. Same telephone message occupied fifteen minutes. Just before leaving he sent to his wife's room to find out where he was dining. Madame was being massaged, but sent word that they were giving a dinner-party at Sherry's, having three boxes at the theatre afterwards, and that then she expected him to come to the Astorbilts' ball. Long cigar, fur coat, gloves, and into the automobile, his secretary sitting beside him, still going through the unfinished letters.

Three inches of snow had fallen during the night—hard, dry snow, on which the horses slipped and struggled as it was being beaten flat, and on which his automobile would have skidded ungovernably if Fifth Avenue had not been already well sprayed by the sand-sprinklers. Progress in the upper part of the Avenue was rapid enough ; but from Madison Square slow, halting, and

intermittent, horses were falling in all directions, stopping the surface-cars packed with a multitude of toilers, all going city-wards; the gong of the automobile clanged petulantly. Down town the upper altitudes of the sky-scrapers were lost in a vague mist of swirling snow that eddied through the chasm-like clefts between them—there were gaps where other gigantic iron frames were rising up to the rattling Maxim-gun-like sound of the steam riveters.

At length they arrived at the high pilloried portico of the immense building in which his office was situated; passing through the revolving doors—mill-wheels perpetually kept turning by a stream of humanity—one of a number of elevators brought him to the floor entirely occupied by his offices. The walls and counters were of white grey-lined marble; polished mahogany desks and burnished brass railings glistened everywhere. Through waiting-rooms and offices he passed to his private office. It was a plain room, richly carpeted, soft leather chairs, a big table on

which were only a few papers; a telephone stood on the right-hand side of the blotter. There were some maps on the walls, nothing more. On a mahogany stand against the wall in the centre of the room, near his desk, stood the ticker, like a sacred image on a pedestal. Strange little god, mysterious little oracle—I don't think I would have felt surprised if on entering he had knelt down before it and said a short prayer. Instead, he seated himself at his desk and commenced speaking into the telephone. There was a switch-board of his private exchange outside the private office which communicated to each of the heads of his departments. Without the delay of sending or going for them, he spoke to six or seven one after the other. Then his confidential clerk came in with a number of papers in his hands. Tickety, tickety, tick, the oracle was speaking all the time, but he took no notice of its remarks—still it went on, as if knowing that sooner or later he would be drawn towards it; and so he was, and passed

the tape through his fingers, pausing here and there; and so throughout the day that little chattering fetish dominated him and every one that entered the room. Men came in, and while waiting, or in a pause in conversation, would be drawn to see what was on its tongue. There is nothing more striking about business in New York than the ease and rapidity with which business is carried out. There had been a bad break in sugar in the morning; X. meant to have some if it came to a certain figure. All the morning down, down, it toppled. Within a few seconds of the time a deal was made from the centre of the Stock Exchange it appeared on the tape in X.'s office. It dropped to his price. "Now, time this," said he; "1204 I want. Buy me 5000 sugar at 92" (twenty seconds gone). "He has got my message, and I am holding the wire till I get a reply. Now he has sent it on his private wire to the Stock Exchange; his own telephone-boy has already his number on the telegraph-board. If he is not

immediately available a two-dollar broker will execute the order." Here comes the reply: "3000 at 92 was all he could get at the price." (Time, 1 min. 35 sec.) To those who are used to the aggravating slowness of the telephone in London, that in New York is a revelation of rapidity, and so much does it enter into the daily life of the community that it would now give something like a stroke of paralysis to the City if all the telephone-wires should be suddenly swept down or the operators suddenly go on strike.

A lunch at the luxuriously furnished Club situated at the top of the building, and not such a serious interruption to business, as during it three messengers come with notes from his office for him. Not much time to dawdle over lunch, as he had three meetings to preside at during the afternoon; then up to the Union Club, a few moments' chat with some friends—change into evening clothes, on to Sherry's—inside the door of the great restaurant he sees a number of

people he knows. "Hallo, you, with whom are you dining to-night?" "Why, with you." "Glad of it." Then he sees Mr. Sherry, and finds his table to see how many he has dining with him. A little late, but radiant in a Worth gown and wearing black pearls, his wife arrives—it is the first time he has seen her during the day.

"So sorry to be late, poppa, but that last rubber of bridge was such a slow one, and I won eight dollars." "Good for you." After dinner he sits in the back of the box; the play or the plot does not interest him; his mind is full of more dramatic scenes—plots that, instead of play, can be made into reality—real live characters that he could make dance to the music of his millions. Then on to that great ball in one of the palaces of Fifth Avenue, a palace to which architects, painters, sculptors, have combined to raise into a dream of luxury such as Rome never equalled.

Strolling through the picture-gallery with an old friend, she who, though born to

millions, kept fresh that perfume of womanliness which we call charm : " You look tired to-night," said he. " No wonder ; out every night now for four months ; lunches, bridge, calls, dinners, theatres, suppers, dances, and the treadmill never stops. I sometimes wish Tom only owned a tiny cottage, and that I had to cook his dinner for him." " And that you might ask me to dine off pork and beans." " You, too, look tired, my master of millions." " I am," said he, " but I am not master of millions, it is the millions who are my master—slave-masters with many-lashed whip that keep me hourly toiling in their service, that never let me rest, keep me working and fighting, and have robbed me of repose, keep a glare of limelight on my life, and after all can buy so little, not real success (I was beaten this week by K., in that Union-Pacific deal), not one drop of blue blood into my veins, not one night of sound delicious sleep, not one kiss from the lips of love."

XVI

THE WOMAN WHO WORKS IN THE CITY OF UNREST

AT a quarter to seven the alarm-clock went off next her bed—how she would have liked to sleep for another hour, or lie warm, and cosy under the clothes! The training in the habit of doing what she did not like helped her into a little tin bath, and to dress close to the radiator, as it was a bitterly cold morning. At 7.30 she stepped out into a snow-covered street and then hurried across Washington-square. Bitterly cold wind shivered through the white coral-like branches of the trees. The snow brought out the carving on the Washington Arch; the snow seemed to suit the whole square, and make it seem still less a part of the

City—the Sleepy Hollow in the City of Unrest, with the solid big houses around it where ladies and gentlemen lived who had refused to be hustled into joining in the general dollar scramble.

In the street on the other side of the square she entered a restaurant, already full of breakfasters. She sat down at one of the marble tables with a couple of men she knew, ordered an orange, coffee, porridge, roll, two eggs—total, thirty cents. Her friends were in offices down town, one of them not earning as much as she was. They were comrades, chums, so much that he often borrowed a dollar from her during those critical days at the month's end.

Breakfast finished, and a glance at the paper—at least, enough to read the headings—and then out on Broadway to take the down-town car. Two passed as she stood at the corner, so packed that there was not standing-room even on the platform for another; then one stopped from which a few passengers struggled out, and she got in.



GENERAL AYUE'S COLUMN ON THE WAY TO LADYSMITH.

All along the centre of the car men and women were standing, holding on to the straps, swaying backwards and forwards as the car swooped forward, and jerking forward every time it stopped. No idea in such a car of the men sitting down, against whose knees hers rubbed, to get up and relinquish their seats—why should they? She did not expect it. Was she not by her very going down town taking the place of a possible man there? was she not showing that she could do a man's work? Equality—he might think himself called on to give up his seat to one of the weaker sex. But there is no sex in the City. Swaying, squeezing, jostling, twenty minutes of uncomfortable cattle-truck-like journey brought her to the big office where she worked.

Men do not doff their hats in the downtown elevators which brought her up to the big office where she was employed, a great room near the top of one of the high downtown buildings; the windows looked out on the river, now a white mass of down-flowing

ice, through which the calling steamers worked their way laboriously towards the harbour, to the Statue of Liberty standing beside what now looked a white gravel path of entry to the city.

There were about fifty people at work in the room, three-fourths women, seated at desks and tables, and some occupied the dignified position of little glass-partitioned rooms. She had one of these to herself, in which there was also a table for a stenographer. It was a publishing-house; books, illustrations, manuscripts, were in evidence everywhere. Near the door was a sort of railed-in pen where men with bundles of manuscript under their arms were usually to be seen seated, waiting. Some of these were even shown into her office, and left minus their bundles, or more often with them. There was a hum of chattering typewriting machines constantly in the air, like the chirruping of insects heard from tropical trees. Constantly her telephone rang and she had to make excursions to the manager's

office, and head printers and printers'-ink-marked men came to her with proof-sheets, and so on, till 12.30, when she went out to lunch at the women's café and had lunch not unlike her breakfast.

The room was full of girls similarly employed, ten to thirty cents being the average of their expenditure; all real workers, none of them the fancy stenographers that their employers frequently take out to little lunches at the smarter restaurants at safe distance from their wives up town. They were not a very attractive crowd—thin, flat-chested, and often anæmic, occasionally with pretty faces, hair, or eyes; but work, daily work, had left its impress on them all. Some (their luncheon bills did not exceed ten cents) looked, with their thin fingers and arms, like human attachments to typewriting machines. There was a something not in the least mannish, but still not appealingly womanly, in these self-reliant, quiet business beings. Was it a sort of neuter gender, a sexless being that was there in course of

development? Somehow, they did not strike one as beings who would bear and suckle and nurse children. Was this severe struggle and necessity of existence to eliminate the supreme joy of motherhood from their lives?

Back to the office, where they joined their fellow men-workers; they were just fellow-workers, no quarter given or looked for in the failure to do their work. Some of them earned fine salaries, yet there seemed a limit-point—thus far and no farther—men were always in the highest positions. Put it down to tenacity of possession, jealousy, prejudice—anything but want of perseverance, circumspection, industry: the obviousness of the fact remains.

Until half-past five her work goes on just the same as before lunch, and then up town on the elevator. Dry snow is spotting the swirling wind that eddies round the corners; the side-walks are thick with hurrying people; the elevator is packed to the platforms with men and women tightly crushed together, worse even than coming down. She

dines at a little Italian restaurant, where the proprietor, his wife, and children personally attend on their customers; it is known only to a few who mostly know each other—constant *habitués*—magazine writers and magazine artists, and miscellaneous, but interesting, nondescripts; and her dinner, with Italian wine included, costs forty cents. It is the pleasantest part of the day for her—men and women of that little writing, artistic, thoughtful, and, in a way, thoughtless set she had known for years; men who could never boom themselves or others, or keep up a bluff even enough to advertise themselves; the slow steps of actual merit made their progress seem like marking time. Ruggles, commonly known to his friends as Rembrandt, saw her home—old Ruggles, who painted better pictures than half the foreigners who came to New York, but who would never be a prophet in his own country. Nice old boy, Ruggles; but the fire was burning low in him, its only fuel being the ashes of disappointment.

The sky had cleared, and the moon shone out on the glorious old square, and red lights suggestive of old' port and big wood fires streaked the silent snow from the windows. "Bully, isn't it?" And the silent pressure of her arm. was affirmative of complete understanding. Her tiny sitting-room was warm; the cheap eastern rugs and dark green background of the walls and some clever original sketches, all were in the harmony of taste that loved restfulness. She lit the gas-stove of imitation logs; Ruggles wheeled a chair in front of it and filled his pipe; from his match she glowed a cigarette, and with a great sigh of relief and tiredness lay back on the sofa.

Then they chatted chum-like of many things. She was doing well—doing a man's work and getting a man's pay, supporting her mother and the two younger girls in the country. It was a strain; but is not successful effort Brian L'Estrange's definition of happiness? So they chatted on until it was time for Ruggles to go.

“Thank you so much for coming, dear old Ruggles; it is so lonely when I come back here by myself.”

“Why don’t you get married?”

“Ah! I don’t know. Perhaps I’m getting old working, and the men I would like to marry don’t care for me, and those that would I don’t like. I don’t think I want really to marry any one, either.”

As he shook hands at the door he said, “You ought to get married, girlie. What a good, and true, and beautiful mother you would make for a boy-child!”

The shooting of the door-hasp seemed to let go the flood-gates of her heart. There was the great longing of her heart—to bear a boy-child. “For joy that a man is born into the world” seemed vaguely ringing in her ears. Like a deep-down spring surface-seeking, that old desire welled up, the perfect reward and crown of valiant womanhood—and she felt how good and tender and true a mother she could be; and as the desolation of denial flooded her soul she threw herself

on that sofa made of empty cases, held the cushions to her, and cried—cried as if her heart would break:

Being independent and alone in her own room, she could cry out her lone cry without any one interfering with unwelcome comforting. Then, pale-faced and red-eyed, she got up, the sobs still coming in little gasps. She looked in the glass as she pushed the black hair back from her blue-veined forehead. With one of those strange revelations of reality that come to people in life when in solitude they look at their own reflection in a mirror—she thought—spoke. “It is too late—too late—for me to be the mother of a boy-child.”

Then she went and set her alarm-clock to a quarter to seven in the morning.

XVII

THE HOU-MEN OF THE DINGY CITY

How they call with different voices, these cities of men—from the Maxim-gun-like rattle of New York, with its chorus of strenuous steamers calling from the water, on over the gamut of different capitals to Tokjo, where the city voice is the tinkling of stilted wooden shoes; not “Twinkle, twinkle, little star,” but “Tinkle, tinkle, little feet,” go the small wooden shoes on the wide firmament of pavement.

Most strident are the American cities; the most sweet-sounding are those of Japan, except in those few streets raided by tram-cars.

What is the voice of London? Is it not the plod, plod, dumping plod of the horses’

hoofs and the jangling rattle of harness and bells, which last we hardly hear, so close is the sound to our ears, like things we cannot see because they are so close to our eyes? As it is a murmurous and noisy city in comparison with those of Japan, so it is peaceful and quiet in comparison with Chicago or New York. A friend of mine from that City of Unrest says that the sound of the London streets has a soothing, lulling effect on him, and makes him sleepy, like the sound of falling water.

As I went up to Euston to-day to meet an Oriental visitor, I fell to speculating how the city might look to him. A very cultured, intellectual fellow he is, who looks into the backs of the eyes of things. A Chinaman born, he had been through college in America, and knew American cities; he had also been studying in Paris, but this was his first visit to London. A wet, drizzling day was not the most propitious for his first impressions. Slopping along in a cab through the muddy streets, as I went under

the portico of Euston Station I was forcefully reminded of one of the big gates of Peking. There is a suggestion of the same massiveness; but the massiveness is only make-face, like the painted cannon on a Chinese city gate. It was an imposing portico to a shamble of sheds.

The railway terminus is the real gate of the modern city.

Yet what absurdly incongruous things these London city gates are—a salad jumble of architecture and machinery with a mayonnaise of train-oil and soot!

As I waited for my friend long trains came rumbling in under a canopy of smoke that hung about the grim iron rafters of this labyrinth. Fifteen minutes ago these trains had been spinning along through the green fields and across the shady lanes of what looked like "Merrie England," although now shaved down and trimmed to intense respectability of cultivation. The heavens darkened and the air thickened as they came close to their journey's end, until they

slow down as if gropingly finding their way into the cavernous gateway of the great dingy city.

What a strange conglomeration of people was waiting on each platform! There was a train leaving to catch the steamer for New York, there was a line of people waiting to take tickets for a close-by station, there was a line of soldiers waiting to be entrained; an American girl was standing on an automatic machine, and getting the railway porter to translate from stones into pounds how much she weighed after her visit to Europe. A couple of Oriental servants seemed to have lost themselves in the labyrinthine station, and were wandering round with Oriental indifference. Porters, with hands and faces and uniforms toned down to the universal greyness of things, trundled their hand-lorries to the monotonous calling of "B' your leave, b' your leave"; and variegated specimens of humanity were looking around after their luggage as one might imagine disembodied souls looking for

their bodies in the Valley of Jehoshaphat on the Last Day. There were not a few touches of cosmopolitanism suggestive of that gathering.

My Oriental alighted from the train. As his Japanese servant was quite capable of looking after his luggage and bringing it to his hotel, his master was left free to come right on with me and exercise his industrious curiosity—a curiosity that seemed never to be surprised at anything he saw, but took everything as a matter of course. He was a man of the world in his own estimation. Nevertheless, what an important part of it he had not yet seen! Was it not a great epoch in his life, this arrival of his in London?

“This is our North Gate.”

“Ah, yes, Hou-Men,” he said. “A very dark day, is it not?”

We drove away in a cab under that sepulchral prison-like portico; we had the glass down, it was raining so hard, and even he, whose Westernisation was principally

confined to New York, noticed the absurdly asphyxiating arrangement of the London cab, which hermetically seals its frame-bound occupants. The New Yorkers got their idea of the cab from us, but they have improved upon the window by having it slanting outwards, so that, while protecting people from the rain, it admits air. For Londoners there is no alternative between spatteration and suffocation. In the New York cabs they can have shelter and fresh air.

It was not an inspiring entrance through these first streets outside Euston into London. The pavement of Melton Street was little better than that of Pekin, and from each side those dreary-looking small hotels blinked out of their closed windows on the muddy street as if wondering when a God-forsaken guest would come and occupy them. And then on through grimy Gower Street, looking like the empty bottom of a drained canal.

It's not very inspiring, this entrance into London from this North Gate of ours.

The people we passed there were not an

interesting lot ; they seemed all to belong to the two-storeyed houses. They were two-storeyed people, apparently keeping themselves moderately busy making a moderate amount of money, but hampered in the money-making by the mud and rain. We passed a little square carpeted with fresh grass, but the trees on the other side were vague in mist, and the square and its vegetation gave the suggestion of a tank with seaweeds in it. It was a day for studying men and women by their umbrellas and boots. Boots tell confessions for the most Low Church Protestants, and the umbrellas above them generally corroborate the sins of the boots.

My Oriental friend was gazing out gravely.

It was on a warm evening in a tea-garden that he had talked about his coming visit to London. I recollect his enthusing over the phrase

“ Beneath the rule of men supremely great
The pen is mightier than the sword.”

A great motto for a great country, he then

said it was. He professed an anxiety to see or meet some of the great English writers, our *literati*, as he called them. He liked the honesty of Englishmen in business, and wanted to see them at work. He had helped to show me something of the life of the East—that part of the life most difficult to see, the life of the home—and in return I promised to show him something of the life of the West, how and where people work and play, and pray—when they do so.

“Show me the house of one of your *literati* if we pass one,” he said. “Is that one, there?” pointing to a gorgeous public-house, as we passed a street corner.

I saw the probable toppling of an ideal. We passed a couple of quick-driving vans with a green placard of an evening paper, and I explained to him what a reading public we were, and how many editions of the papers were quickly distributed during the afternoon, how the appetite for them had grown, like the craving for cheap cigarettes, as a relief from being obliged to inhale pure



HOSPITAL TRAIN LEAVING LADSMITH FOR PIETERTITZBURG.

literary air. The newspaper habit and the cigarette habit are about on a par after all.

We passed a church with closed doors, and he seemed surprised. I explained to him that the churches were open on Sunday, on which day the more numerous temples of Bacchus were closed for a while.

We reached the Strand, where he was greatly interested in a line of 'buses. "Have you no street cars like in New York?" I submitted that these were kept on chiefly in order to have a supply of artillery horses in times of war.

"And have you no high buildings either?"

The explanation of ancient lights and the overhead space wasted in London was too much to go into. His attention was diverted by a newspaper placard.

"Ah," said he, "another earthquake, is it not?"

"Collapse of Australia" stared from that vermillion placard. It began to dawn on me that I had undertaken rather a large order in showing this Oriental London life.

“And you have not shown me any of your *literati* yet, or any of their houses.”

We were stoppèd in a block of omnibuses and cabs. A line of sandwich-men were straggling along between vehicles and the curb. One of them stopped just by our cab ; the rain was trickling down his nose ; he looked as dismal as the weather. I could not resist the temptation of explaining that these were some of our *literati* undergoing punishment for some of the books or plays they had written. In China the crime is set forth on a board hung on the neck of the criminal, called the *cangue*. It was only a very mild surprise he showed when I gave him the names of the line of sandwich-men. “How like the head of your Shakespeare !” he said of one.

We were received at the hotel door by a brass-bound German in the undress uniform of a British admiral, who pays the hotel £500 for receiving tips. The rooms and corridors of the big building did not look hospitably cheering. There were no fires in the grates,

because, being June, the weather ought to have been warm ; and the electric lights were not turned on, because, being daytime, there ought to have been light. He liked the smoking-room. "It is more like one of our big tea-houses," he said. "Men do business here," pointing to a man with a sheaf of papers talking earnestly to another beside him.

"Yes, that is a company promoter."

"What is a company promoter?"

The nearest definition that occurred was, "A man who sells something he hasn't got to another who does not want to buy it."

"I think London is a very interesting city," he said.

XVIII

T I R E D

It was the fag end of the week in the Dingy City. A heavy weight of dusty grey cloud lay oppressively inert, vaguely resting on the house and tree tops, and underneath the cloud the air seemed stagnantly confined; in its lowest strata people had been breathing it all day—all the week, in fact—in and out of their lungs, so that it was no wonder it felt tired and second-hand and used up.

The air-thirst of their lungs had impelled those who were energetic to go away to where fresh air was to be breathed; but the very tired, and those who lacked the energy for initial impetus, remained. The shops had been closed, and the sunlight beat upon

the shuttered eyelids of their windows on the Phryne side of Piccadilly. By that hour on Saturday afternoon Regent Street and Piccadilly were wearing almost a Sunday appearance; Ranelagh and Hurlingham and the new club at Roehampton were crowded with smart people, and for hours past trains from Paddington and Waterloo had been carrying thousands of Panama-hatted, white-trouserred men and summer-clad women riverwards. Though the shops were closed, some belated workers, in ones or twos or threes, continued to dribble out from their doors.

Going westward, along Piccadilly, a slight, dark-haired young girl stepped out from one. She was dressed in a thin white blouse that showed the outline of her arms and shoulders; she did not join the crowd of others who were scaling the 'buses on the opposite side of the street, but turned to walk along the pavement parkwards. One fell to speculating as to why she walked. There was no spring or elasticity in her step as if she were doing so for

the enjoyment of the exercise. Her feet, in boots with heels slightly rounded on the outside, seemed to drag on that hot pavement. Possibly the 'bus fare was an item of consideration, even though she looked as if she had spent all the morning on her feet in the shop. With thick, dark hair and good eyes, it would have taken very little aid in the way of dress to make her appear quite good-looking. As it was, men turned to look at her as she passed, and one even came across the street, followed, and leered at her as he came abreast; she held on the even tenor of her way, taking no notice of them. On, past the clubs, through the street vocal with the clanking stamp of the horses' hoofs — horses with shining flanks, who cocked their ears, and tossed their foam-dripping mouths as they passed the water-trough.

Wooden stands here and there still disfigured some of the house fronts, and here and there a red pole, looking like a sugar-stick that a child had been sucking, stood

as a memento of one of the most hideous schemes of tawdry decoration that a civilised city has ever shown.

At Hyde Park corner she turned in towards the trees, following the stream-crowd direction of other pedestrians. She stopped near the railings, watching the procession of carriages going by. A girl, so like herself that they might almost have been sisters, passed in a high C-sprunged carriage. Looking from one to the other, the great difference made by little things was apparent. An application of powder-puff to the moist face of the girl at the railings would have worked improvement; her cotton gloves hung down flaccidly from the bare hand which held up her skirt; perhaps some such thought as that of the unfair distribution of C-spring carriages in this world crossed her mind, as she turned away and languidly continued her journey westward under the trees.

The seats were full of a heterogeneous collection of people, all more or less under

the drowsy influence of that stagnant air. Here and there men were to be seen asleep in the chairs. Heads in tall hats nodded, debarred the luxury enjoyed by those tramps who lay at full length under the trees on the grass behind. Between those luxuriating on the grass, men lying in their shirt-sleeves, with heads a-resting in the laps of tired-faced women, whose children played or cried noisily around, and those who passed in the procession of carriages, was the intervening line of people from which all sorts of specimens could be taken of the great mediocracy of England—those who could no more afford a carriage than they could afford to lie on the grass. The men's heads were branded with tall hats, remnants and summer sales were suggested in the costumes of many of the women; an occasional glimpse of shoes or hosiery explained why the graceful holding up of the skirts should be unstudied or unknown on this side of the Channel. And their gloves were of the same character as the hose.

Curious specimens were to be found amongst that crowd. A man passed whom I recollect seeing there as long as I can recollect going to the park. Go round the world and back, and here one was certain to find him. I know his income—it is just three hundred a year; except that his whiskers had got a little whiter, he looked just the same as usual. The frock-coat he wore I have a sort of suspicion was the same as I saw on him two years ago. I could swear to the umbrella—at least the handle, because possibly it had been recovered. The frock-coat would obviously not see another season—not that it was showing any tinge of green about the shoulders, far from it. But perhaps it was a feeling of doubtfulness about the coat, which prompted a startling departure in his costume. He had gone in for a pair of those yellow, chamois-coloured gloves which have made their appearance this season. He sauntered along leisurely, watching the people and the carriages with apparently the

same degree of interest as he had done for the past ten years. I have heard that long ago he had a good tenor voice, and he used to speak authoritatively of great singers, when they really were great singers, not such as now. . . . I've never seen him talking to anybody in the park, and I've never seen him smoke; yet his lips are seldom at rest. They have now got a motion something between that of a nervous American with a cigar and a cow chewing the cud. This is the result of the movableness of his artificial teeth. Perhaps an extra visit to his dentist was an item of expenditure not to be lightly incurred.

What appeared to be corresponding feminine types were to be seen in profusion. Women with incomes of one hundred, two hundred, three hundred a year, women who had passed the age either of matrimony or naughtiness. What thousands of friendless and lonely people there must be in this great Dingy City! The class that lies on the grass is more sociable; they are free

from a thousand tyrannies that oppress the mediocracy.

The face of a woman dressed in black, seated between two children, seemed familiar; not until she bowed did I recognise her as the wife of an old friend who had been killed in Ladysmith. She used to be the prettiest officer's wife of his smart regiment; and from her account it would have been better if she had not been so pretty, or the regiment so smart. She was now left with barely his pension for herself and the two children to live on. . . . Yet very bravely, apparently, she had faced the change!

"Oh, I have tried various things for the last couple of years," she said, "but I am afraid there is nothing I can do. I even tried the stage for a time." She used to have a good voice. "But the managers were horrid, and the pay was very small. Then I tried to give music lessons; but what I got was hardly worth the distances I had to go; so now I have to settle down to

working out daily problems in domestic economy."

"And all your friends?"

"Oh, they all were very nice and kind; but one cannot go about without being properly dressed, and when one keeps refusing invitations, one gradually becomes forgotten in time. I felt rather lonely just now when I saw the people driving down to Hurlingham. Come along, chicks, we must be going now. You see," she said, "it is a long 'bus ride to our little flat."

At the end of the long free seat, beyond where they had been sitting, was a strange, haggard-looking woman; a pair of cheap cotton gloves showed her thin white wrists, and her black dress looked dusty and draggled. She had a strange haunted look on her face, as if she had left some tragedy behind her at home. Every time a carriage with scarlet-liveried coachmen passed, she got up and stood on the seat. Perhaps she had journeyed there to see the Queen. She looked cross and disappointed each time she

stepped down again. On the other side a couple of girls were discussing those that passed in the carriages, and speculating as to who they might be. It was interesting to follow their surmises.

"I think that's Lady X.," one of them said, as a lady, driving a pair of high-steppers, passed.

But it wasn't. The little fellow sitting beside her glowed with the importance of proprietorship; but, smart little chap that he was in Throgmorton Street, he had no idea how many understudies there were to his part, and did not realise that there are syndicates outside those of the City.

"What an awfully common-looking woman!" the other said, as an old lady passed in her carriage behind a sleepy pair of horses, sleepily driven, the fat pug dog at her feet suffering eclipse by the jelly-shaking arc of her redundant figure. She happened not to be common by any means, but one of the brightest and most good-natured members of one of the

was making a picture of over the way; it was not the Dingy City here. At least this was an oasis in it. But here, in this oasis, playground or pleasure-ground, the People of the Serious City was what was writ on their faces.

Five hours later the park was almost deserted, and the gleam of white shirt-front or tulle-foam was caught as a closed carriage passed.

The old bachelor was asleep in his chair at an open window looking across the narrow street at the familiar sooty face of the house opposite.

"Good-night, Tom; I do hope it will be fine for to-morrow," the black-haired girl was saying at her door, holding in her hand the new hat she had been trimming.

The Volunteer colonel was discussing Buller and port across the glittering dinner-field.

The little fair-haired boy had climbed softly out of his cot, and, going over to his mother's bed, whispered coaxingly, "Will



BOER PRISONERS.

'oo let me sleep with 'oo, mummy?" and when he had nestled his head on her arm, "Now tell me the story how daddy died," and was asleep before the familiar story was finished.

XIX

THE CITY OF DUMB DISTANCES

I AM sure there must be many to whom the idea occurs at such times of the year as this, at the end of the season, when people are scattering out of London, that friends are leaving whom we would like to have had the time to have seen before they went. How often, looking over the pages of one's address book, one says, "I wonder how it is I have not seen So-and-so for an age," and one feels that people we used to enjoy meeting, if they do not happen to move in the same orbit of metropolitan existence, are vanishing from our ken. They are being lost in the Limbo of long distances. An hour of Underground in very hot weather may give the remoteness of Styx-ferryage.

It would be nice even to be able to speak to one's friends who are not conveniently visitable. In other cities this is possible, but not here. The telephone service of an American town or a Norwegian village is a thing of which London has never got even sufficient sample-taste to realise what she is deprived of, or what she ought very reasonably to demand. There is no reason why London should remain telephonically deaf and dumb. There is nothing which strikes the visitor more forcibly, however, than the long-suffering patience of the Londoner. The exasperatingly slow, inefficient apology for a telephone service that would not be tolerated anywhere else is good enough for London. It is no excuse to plead in apology the great size of the City, when there is the example of New York before one, where there are more telephones, where they are cheaper, and where the average time to get into communication with another subscriber appears to be a third or a fourth of the time taken in London. It is only when one has had actual

experience of a thoroughly telephoned town that one appreciates the convenience of it. Look what it means for saving time in shopping, doing business, making appointments, and speaking to one's friends. "I got a telephone put right into my room the day I arrived," said an American friend, "but the people I want to speak to most often don't seem to use them, and it is so darned slow getting on to those that do that now I am keeping a cab by the day; it is quicker in the end, and makes me swear less."

It will only be a matter of time, and that not so very far off, when wireless telegraphy will replace the telephone. The principle of sending messages in a multiplicity of keys, so that a message sent will only be received on the instrument keyed for it, has been established, and only requires practical working out. Until that time London will probably have to remain as deaf and dumb as it is.

As regards getting from one part to another, it is not a cheerful thing to

contemplate that what should be the most agreeable way of traversing London—I mean the pathway of the river—should just now be closed, and while Mr. Yerkes looks out on it from his offices in the Hotel Cecil, Londoners have to look to him to see if he or Pierpont Morgan will not open it to them again. What a pleasant alternative from the asphyxiating Underground or the tortoise-moving omnibus would not a fast, comfortably fitted line of river steamers be! It seems inconceivable that, with such a waterway and such primitive and inadequate alternative means of travel, the people should stand its being closed. What a great, stimulating, suggestive pathway it is through the Dingy City! Coming from a dance early the other morning I walked along the Embankment, to see a carpet of blue and silver being laid along the river as if by the angels of the dawn; and at evening in ever-varying schemes of sometimes gorgeous colour a richer carpet is laid sunsetwards, while the smoke and dust exhalation of the City is

glorified to an incense offering by the stained rose window to the west. At such times the Dingy City looks great, robed in vague organ-tones of colour. But you must no longer walk on that carpet, even though the angels have laid it for you; you must no longer see your city from that pathway; you must burrow homewards from your work in a sewer-pipe of stink, and deeper rabbit-warrens of burrowing are being prepared for you, and you have no Declaration of Independence that secures to you the undeniable right to breathe fresh air. Long-suffering, patient Londoner! To whom does the City belong, and the river? If you reward with honours the men who make beer or whisky for you, or supply you with cheap tea, or signalise themselves by successfully struggling against disease, there ought to be the inducement of honours and reward waiting for the man or men that would help the millions in their daily struggle with this plague of long distances. Is there no knight to champion the cause of the toilers of London

and in earnest tackle this dragon problem of distances? That is left to enterprising Americans who come over from pure philanthropy (?) to help you. Three years of his life are spent by the average-lived Londoner in the Underground, who has to take a daily half-hour's journey in it to get to his business. A man with an office in the neighbourhood of the Stock Exchange and a dwelling-house in South Kensington will spend about four or five years of his life going to and fro. To an extent it is a necessary evil. We cannot transport ourselves by telegraph, but there are things that the people of the largest city in the world might reasonably expect. They might expect to have as good facilities for getting about as the people of the most progressive cities in the world; they might expect to have the power to speak when they will with the same quickness, cheapness, and facility as people of other cities. But there is a dull feeling of resigned apathy about them. They will not insist on making any one "get a move on" them to get these

things done ; will no more think of hustling themselves than a cab-horse in a growler hired by the hour.‘

If London may be considered the head—the brain of the Empire—the blood-circulation of that brain is surely of vital importance. When keen competitors seize every time-saving, labour-saving weapon as it is offered to help them in the conquest of trade, can we afford to do without them ? The business methods of twenty years ago will not do for to-day, still less will they do for twenty years to come. The methods which our competitors are practising are what will tell, and they cannot be imitated and acquired in a hurry when their importance will become suddenly alarmingly apparent. I think the position is far more serious than the stay-at-home Englishman realises. Perhaps from these passing years the future historian will get material for the opening chapters of his work on “ British Trade : its Decline and Fall.”

XX

THE LAND OF THE EVENING CALM

IT is difficult to think this morning that it was only last evening I left London. Lying on one's back on a soft carpet of pine spirules on the slope of the hill, the deep green of the water in the harbour shows through the pine branches. There is a plumage of bracken around wonderful green feathers, that are rising on their slender stems from the thick brown carpet of nature's plush, which hushes one's footsteps through the wood and makes them noiseless, except when one treads on a crisp tory top. There is a delightful hush under this cool roof pillared by the brown tree-trunks, but it is not silence. There is a soft hum that comes

ceaselessly to one's ear, sometimes anear, sometimes afar, from one knows not where, from bees, perhaps, busy amongst the hurts or honeysuckle just below. Up above a wood-pigeon keeps cooing that ceaseless question, or is it a question, or the plaint call of his pigeon heart for love? or has he lost his love, and croons a mourning for her? Distinct from and louder than the murmur of the bees is a rustling of the water from below where the outgoing tide from the river meets the water of the harbour; and mingled with that, one can just faintly catch the hushed sound of an occasional wave on the rocks. It is a holiday with the breakers, and the sea moves its fringe as gently as if fanning itself to sleep. The river winds around below, and down to its edge the hills are tree-covered—not there altogether with pines, but with rounded luxurious clumps of dark trees, recalling Doré's idea of a forest—they are exactly Doré's trees. It does not look from here as if the river went up farther, but around that bend is the deep

green water called Drake's Pool. It was there that Admiral Drake, outnumbered and chased along the Irish coast by the Spanish fleet, hid from them. The Spaniards came into the harbour and searched around, but never thought there was an opening through the trees. And there Drake waited with his high-pooped ships until they went away. Close to the trees that grow around the steep margin of the pool and always darken the green water, even in daytime, fishermen who go there at night to fish for conger tell that when the moon has been clouded at midnight they have seen the shapes of queer-looking ships, and on their high sterns the forms of men in outlandish costumes, sitting around drinking.

* Right on the summit of this hill which commands the harbour is the Giant's Grave ; and *à propos* of commanding the harbour, Napoleon I. knew of it, and had a plan for the invasion of Ireland, in which was included the idea of occupying this hill, from which he could command from the rear the

forts at the harbour's mouth. He would have planted his guns on the Giant's Grave. We know little of the history of that giant, except that he carried off the wife of another giant who lived on the Great Island opposite, and held her here in his fastness amid the pine trees against all efforts to wrest her from him. A huge rock that he hurled back in one of these fights is still to be seen on the shore of Spike Island.

A twittering flutter of white and grey below me a few yards away. It is a rabbit—and now another. Their ears are cocked, but they do not appear to notice me in the least. They hop about quite noiselessly on the brown carpet. The crowing of a cock in the distance seems almost musical, and there is some insect in the tree above me that appears to be trying to give an imitation of a telegraph instrument. I wonder what these rabbits are saying to each other. They seem very alert and interested. Now a third appears on the scene. Two of them are beginning to play, at least I thought so

at first—and I feel in this peaceful wood I should have left it at that, but having to recollect the heading of these chapters I have to record the fact that they are fighting. I never saw rabbits fight before, but they are fighting like mad. I now see, in fact, the origin of the expression making “the fur fly.” The third is just skipping around watching intently with big round eyes and its ears erect—perhaps the third is timekeeper, or perhaps it is the story of the giants over again. The new-comer was getting the best of it. I am sorry now that I could not resist the temptation of taking a shot at them with my fountain pen. They fled instantly. Perhaps the little rabbit lady is glad—she may be licking the wounds of her Lancelot in their burrow a few yards away while he is telling her that he would have beaten the other fellow all right in the end if that darned fool hadn’t thrown his fountain pen, while she agrees, as she works her little rabbit tongue soothingly, although privately she has her “doots.”

How interesting it would be to be able to study the lives of all these little people in this wood ! There are terrible weasels here who wage a sanguinary warfare against the rabbits—a guerilla war that no war correspondent I know of has yet got his pass for. The seagulls are beginning to talk now in a New York pitch of voice, and one can get an occasional gleam of their wings through the blue-green pine branches. I think it is their dinner-time when the tide goes out and spreads a table-strip of slob for them on the shore.

How thankful we ought to be to have such dear stupid neighbours as the English, who don't come in hordes of tourists to desecrate this delightful land ! Those who love it with intimacy of knowledge—this wild coast with its rock fingers stretching into the Atlantic and harbours around which the trees nestle for shelter from the winter storms—the ruined castles with empty “magic casements, opening on the foam of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn”—own

it still for their pleasure, moss-grown with history as vivid as the lichens on its rocks or ruins.

Perhaps from a sense of justice, our neighbours think the invasion of Cromwell's army was enough, and that we ought to be spared from something worse, so that the hordes rush off perspiring over the Continent and elsewhere, and just a few nice people come and come again to the South of Ireland, and say they like that cordial greeting that always is waiting for the Englishman personally, who only in the abstract is disliked. Then the Irish railways and hotel-keepers act in a very nice and gentlemanly fashion ; the former do not force on the notice of the tourist hordes that a train leaves Euston or Paddington every evening which would land them here at 10.30 in the morning for a few shillings. The latter are quite content with the knowledge they have themselves that they possess now as comfortable and well-fitted-up hotels as any in the world.

A little old Irish lady was reduced to selling apples in the street. "Fresh apples, fresh apples!" she would call out; then, to herself, "I hope no one will hear me."

I do not know, indeed, whether we have to thank most our kind neighbours or the railway and hotel people for the blessing we enjoy in this Land of the Evening Calm that still keeps

"A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

One fills one's lungs with the delicious air, aromatic with pine perfume, to send it out in a sigh of infinite content.

From across the water comes a sound of music; it is some one playing a cornet. The air the unseen musician is playing sounds familiar. He is only practising—learning—— Ye gods! Is there no place where one can get away from that air? But yet, does not it speak volumes for the remoteness of this harbourage of repose to realise that the unseen musician is only now *learning* "The Honeysuckle and the Bee"?



JAPS ENTERING PEKIN.

XXI

WITH SOME TOILERS OF THE SEA

"STOP makin' a noise wid your face, man, and cook the spuds; 'tis time for dinner." Thus Tim to Mike, who had been expounding a theory of his on the wayward habits of mackerel. Tim occasionally comes out with quaint phrases worthy a wider audience. "Mr. Speaker, the right hon. member who has just been making a noise with his face on this amendment"—how would that sound?

There are three men in the boat, not including the writer—Tim, Mike, and Dennis—engaged in lobster-fishing. They have lived in her now six weeks from the time they left Baltimore; "doin' purty well, thank God," they admit. The fishing and the weather and the price all "purty fair."

They get ten shillings a dozen for the lobsters, small or large, from the cutters that sail along the coast to collect them and take them to England, and they consider a couple of dozen lobsters a very good day's fishing. They don't get as good a price in the middle of the summer, however. They are going to stop the lobstering just now for the autumn mackerel-fishing, which they hope will be as good as the mackerel-fishing of last spring, which was the best for the past four years. The open boat, which they own in partnership, is a strongly built one about twenty-two feet long, with a lug and foresail of brown canvas and great flat stones for ballast. The whole outfit, including the lobster-pots, cost them twenty-five pounds. The pots have been set and baited with gurnet; during the two hours' interval we are anchored. A curious thing about the craft is the galley. On a spar which stretches from the bow to about four feet up the mast is stretched a piece of brown canvas just forward of the mast, on a flat stone some lumps of turf

are burning, and under this canvas is spread the straw on which my friends sleep. Mike is now washing a prodigious quantity of potatoes in a large iron pot, "a grate crop of praties this year, but the salt water plays the divil with the keeping av them, like that," and he holds up one with a red mark on it in his gigantic paw. I kept wondering if they were really going to eat all these potatoes at one meal. They did, however, washed down with milk from a big tin jug which they passed around. They make their own bread or griddle-cake, but that was to be taken with their tea for breakfast or supper. Tim is a teetotaler, and his two partners have a limit of three pints (of porter) when they are ashore. They always go ashore on Sundays, when two of them go to Mass, while the other minds the boat and the lobsters. Three great, simple, almost child-like giants they are, yet not without a certain natural courtesy—a core of genuine politeness within a rough rind.

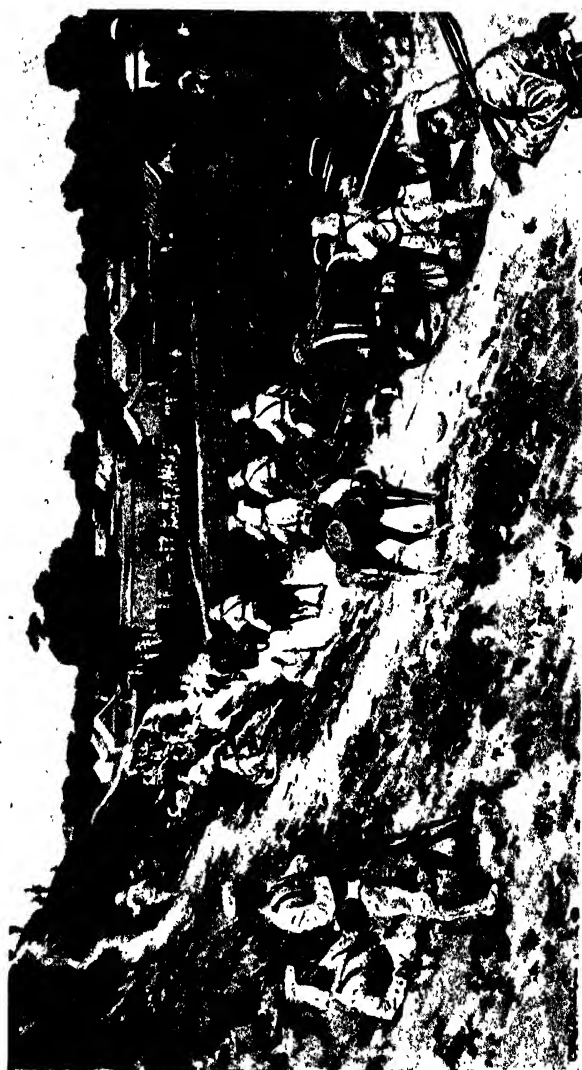
It was great to see how they made that

heavy boat move with their long oars, coming out of the harbour this morning; and yet they hardly ever eat any meat. Potatoes and milk are their chief diet; fish sometimes—"an' thin we has to sample the lobsters sometimes; it wouldn't do not to sample what we are daling in." They cooked one in honour of their visitor, who never tasted a better. Then they lit the pipe, which they smoked in turn, and soon it was time to pick up the pots. Three lobsters and a crawfish were the haul. What magnificent colour in the strong yet delicate armour of their shells! Deep blue shaded into brown, mottled in yellow spots, with deep red at the joints. They were put into the big basket, which already contained over three dozen. What a terrible time the poor brutes must have there! Two or three weeks in this boat, probably the same time in the tank of the cutter, and a week or two more in another ashore before they are eaten. I asked if they ever gave them any food, but found they never

did. "One av them dies off an' on, and thin the others ate him, an' they are always atin' the small claws off each other." Talk of the lobster blushing because it saw the salad dressing; but ought it not to make a member of the S.P.C.A. blush to eat lobster mayonnaise? We set the brown sails to lay the pots again further along the coast. It is a glorious day, the wavelets dancing on the surface of the long Atlantic swell that heaves ponderously; for, as Tim remarked, "the adjacent parish wesht is Ameriky." A glorious translucent green under the shadow of the leaning sails, and beyond, under our lee, the line of breakers on the rocks, tapestried in the rich brown of autumnal seaweed, and above them, in more broken billows, fields that make the island called "Emerald."

While waiting after laying the pots again, the wind kept freshening, and heavier clouds in big battalions kept hurrying up from windward. The trio seem unanimous that we are in for a bit of a blow. Tim says 'tis going to

be a nasty night, and we must go in somewhere, although night is the best time for their fishing. Only one jack-lobster out of all the pots this time. It was now blowing hard and beginning to rain, so, with one reef in, we started again. It was a ripping breeze; I knew of old how quickly the wind can rise along that coast. The last time I was in Baltimore—picturesque old place, with its ruined abbey and the memory of the sacking of it by Moorish pirates, and the carrying-off of the women from only the eighteenth century back—was when I sailed round in a half-decked 16-footer, designed by Watson. She was a great little boat, with a ton of lead on her keel. As I was nearing the harbour just such a breeze sprang up, and, being single-handed, I could not take in a reef, so had to carry on; right outside the harbour my foresail carried away, but I got in all right under the mainsail, and anchored alongside the Baroness Burdett-Coutts's yacht that was there at the time. I asked Tim about the money she had lent to the



RELIEF OF PEKIN.

men there for buying fishing-boats. "Ah, thin, she's a good woman, God bless her; there's many rich or well-to-do men in Baltimore to-day through the means of her, an' ivery penny paid back—divil a penny av a bad debt."

The smaller the boat the greater the delight of sailing; you get closer to things than in big boats. It is part of yourself, half in the sea and half in the air, and with the sea and breezes you play or fight. White sails standing patiently upright, waiting, and adown from over the hills comes along the breath of the wind, breathing across the mirror; gently, ripplingly, comes the wind to play, and would try to pass, but you catch it in your white wings—catch it and hold it, leaning over to its fleeing passage, and press the trembling tiller-pulse, now throbbing with life, and luff as the boat darts forward in joy of possession of the wind, but she passes, gently, gently up again with the tiller till she leaves the sails with the lingerage of a caress.

But more fun is the fight and tussle in that wonderful surface fighting-line between sea and wind, which laugh as they fight, blowing and buffeting, with you between and the little boat-part of you, now intensely alive and glad like you to be alive, to sing back to the wind any old song as she passes her fingers through your hair.

One unique sensation of the almost uncanny mingling of the two elements I can never forget, when once, at daybreak, I went down into the Cave of the Winds under Niagara Falls; on along the slippery path, the spray streaming down the oilskins; within a few feet that shimmering, glistening wall of falling water, the sense of hearing gone in intoxication of most musically thunderous noise. One seemed breathing water, so finely spray-saturated was the air. One seemed to have passed the portals into a strange, eerie, watery world.

Every moment the wind came up, piping louder and louder, scudding across the now darkening water. The entrance to Oyster

Haven was only half a mile on. It was too far to go to Kinsale. The Old Head was invisible in blue-grey mist.

How things find voice in music! I recollect in the climax of the fight at Elandslaagte, when the uproar of various sounds was simply terrific, from the shrill treble of the whimpering bullets to the trumpet-like whoop of the shells as they arched overhead, to alight with a drum-boom and burst with a cymbal crash; the whole orchestra of battle was, playing—it seemed that every one must recognise the air—"The Ride of the Valkyrie;" and now the driving rain and the salt spindrift, the flapping of the leech of our brown sail, every note of accompaniment is being given to that great air that runs through Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, which the wind is singing louder and louder. Tim sits up well to windward, the tiller quivering in his hand, the rain beating on one side of his face, his beard blowing out from the other. Tim doesn't think what a good model for a Viking he makes just

now. The real actual Viking must have been very little different in appearance from Tim.

We were not long in making that last half-mile, and dropped anchor close inshore. At once on doing so the many advantages of the canvas cabin were apparent. The boat, riding head to wind, made the bow under the canvas quite snug. Mike blew the bellows on the smouldering sods of turf which had never quite gone out; it is true the eddying smoke resulting therefrom was smarting to the eyes, but the resulting hot tea was compensation. It was useless for me to try to explain that it would be a real pleasure for me to sleep outside in my waterproof—that it would make me dream of being outside Santiago in the trenches, or on the veldt. It was only a matter of which of the three—who all wanted to—should give up his berth on the straw. Dennis succeeded eventually. It was a bad night. It was snug and “comfy” inside on the straw as the boat cradled on the broken

aftermath of swell. The rain played in sheets of notes on the flapping canvas, and from its edge wraiths of smoke shuddered off into the darkness; and, dropping off to sleep, I listened to the Storm moaning the air of the Waldstein to the ear of Beethoven.

THE END

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